# CORNUCOPIA

URKEY FOR CONNOISSEURS

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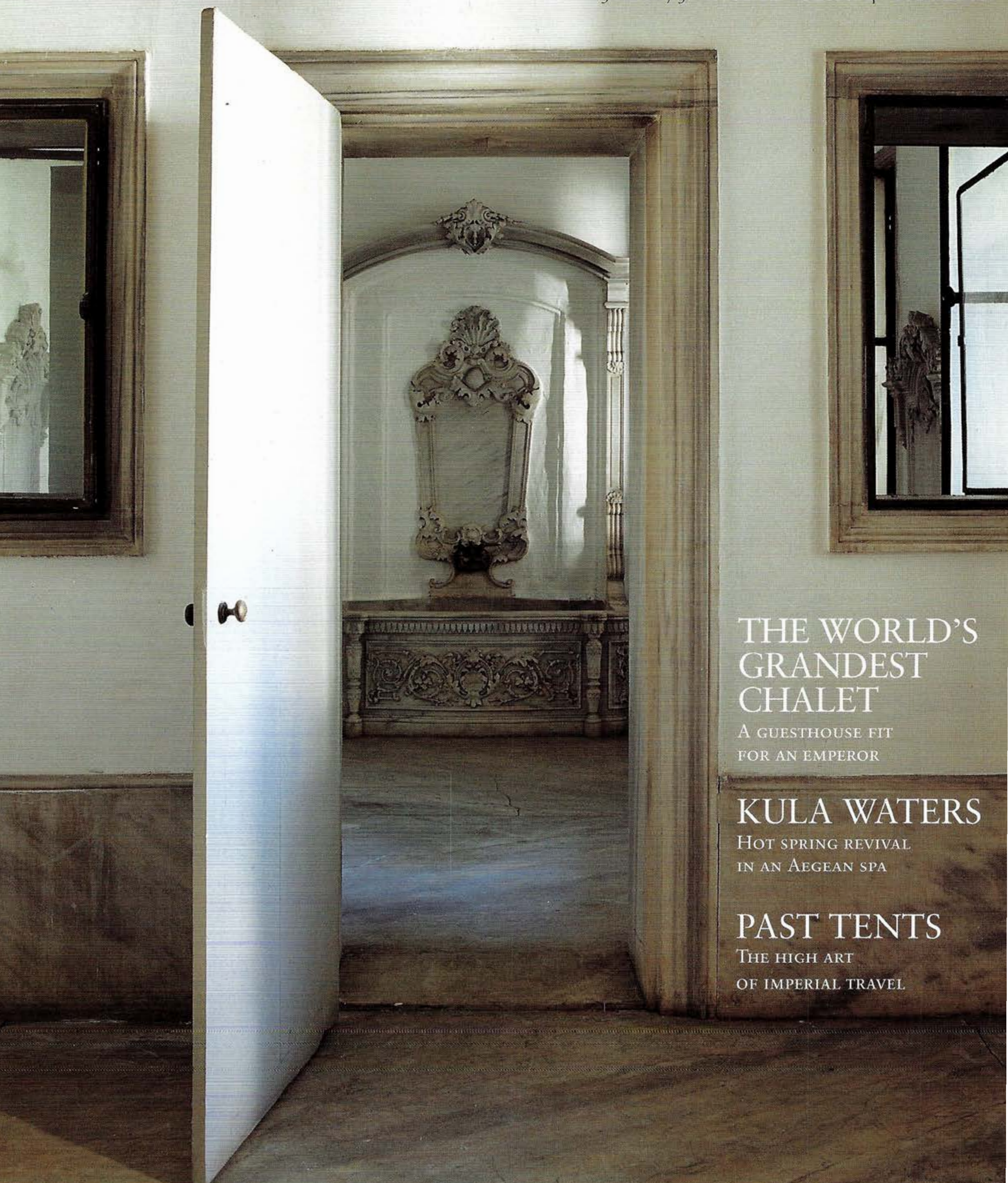

## THE WORLD'S GRANDEST CHALET

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## KULA WATERS

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## PAST TENTS

THE HIGH ART OF IMPERIAL TRAVEL

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Photograph by Fritz von der Schulenburg

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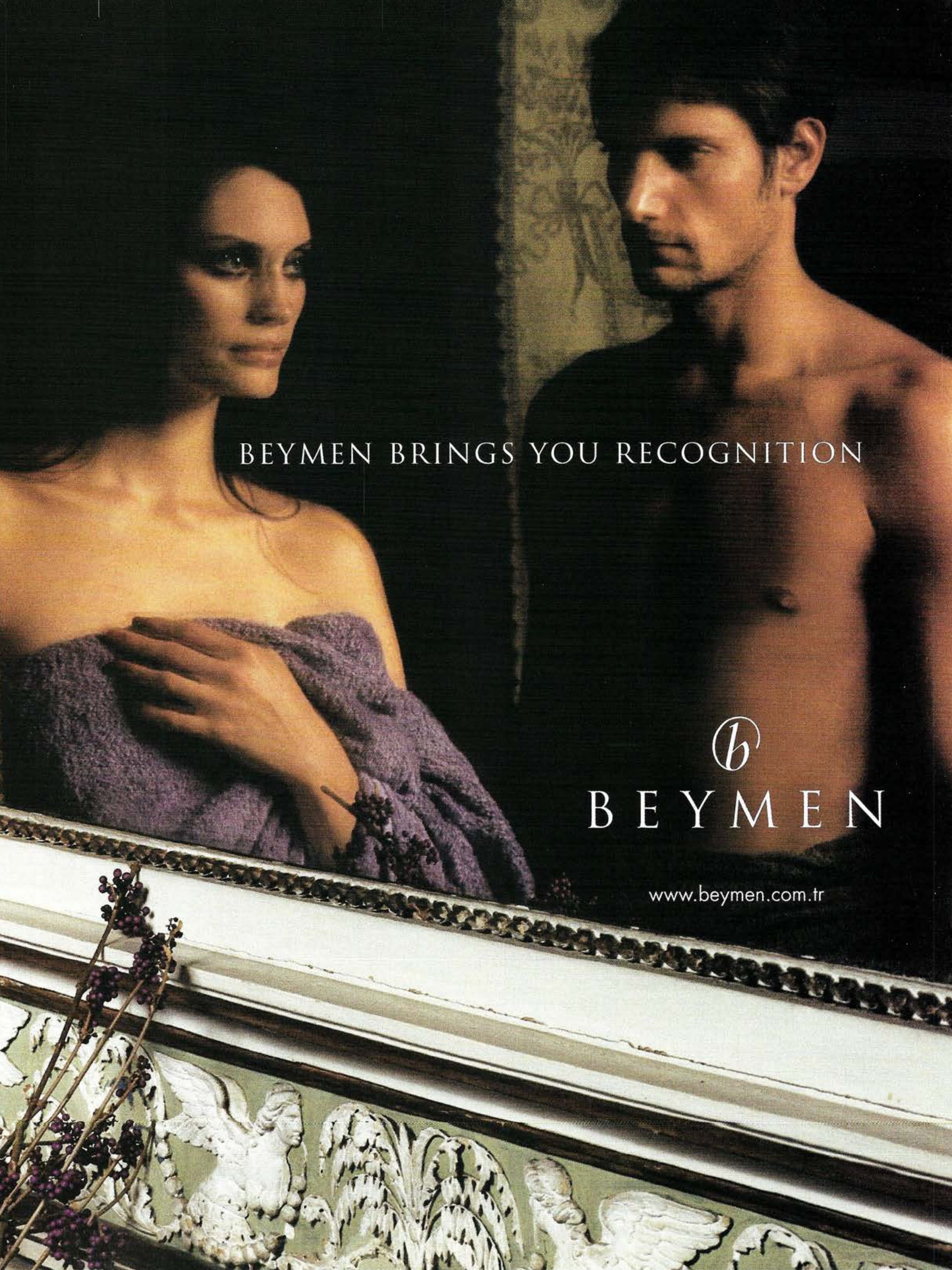
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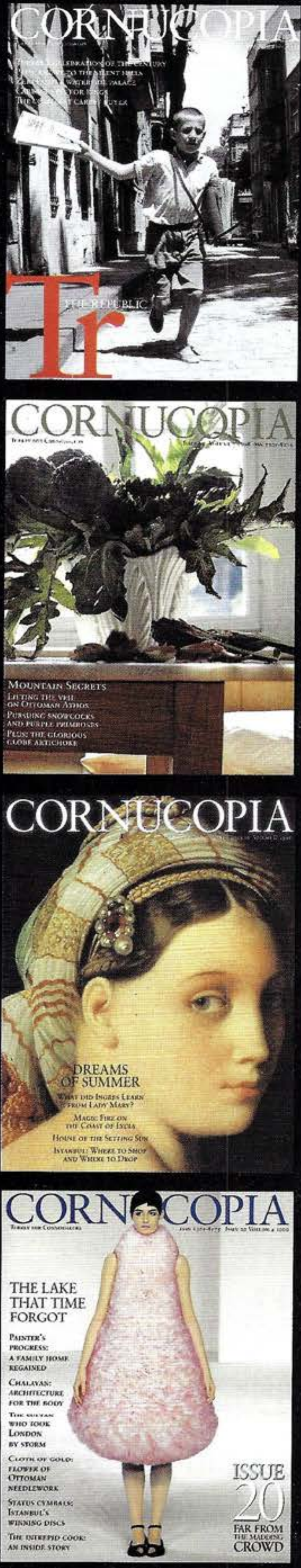
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The Latin *cornu copiæ* or 'horn of plenty', a horn overflowing with flowers, fruit and corn; symbol of prosperity and abundance in the cities of Anatolia.

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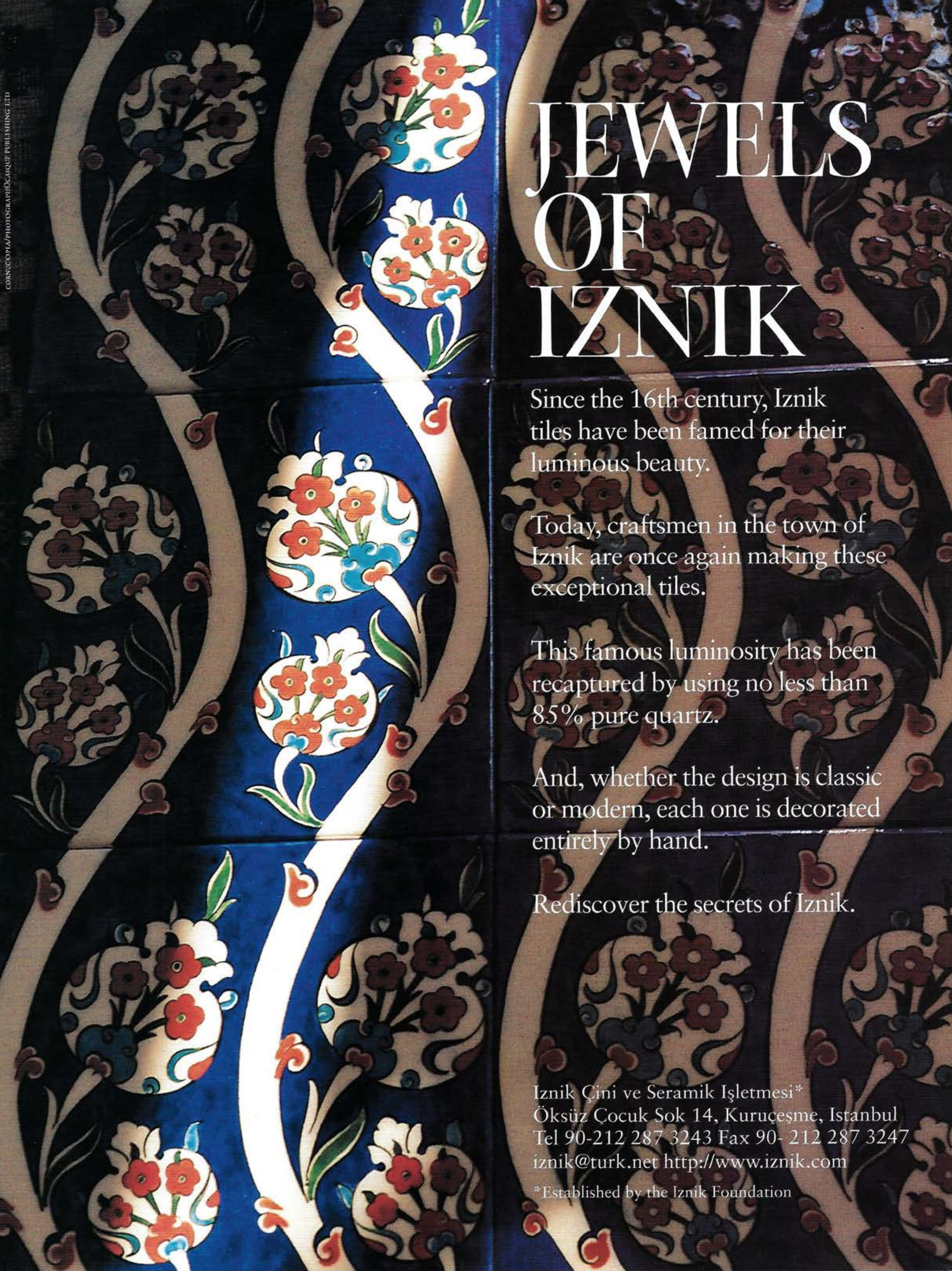

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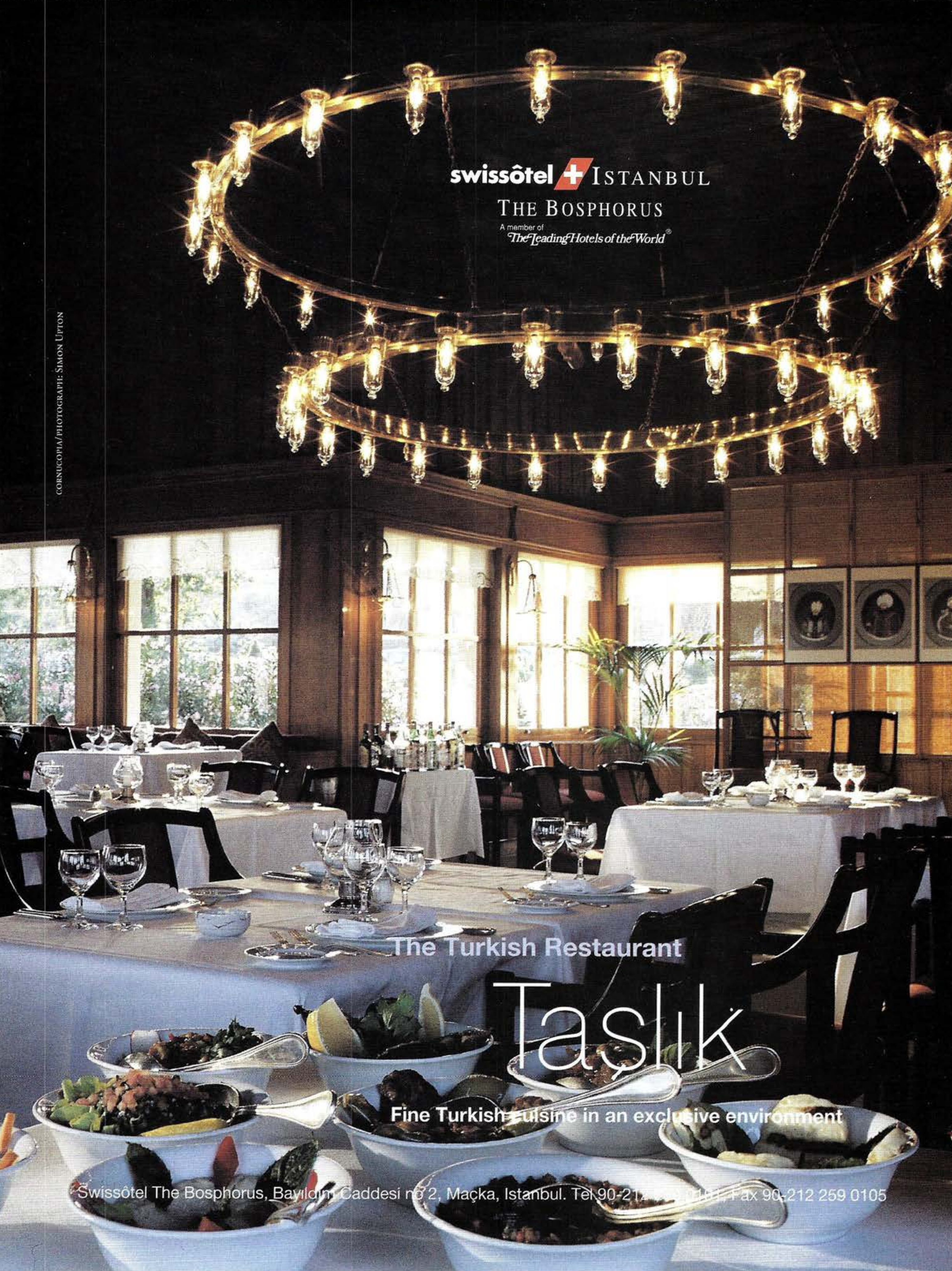
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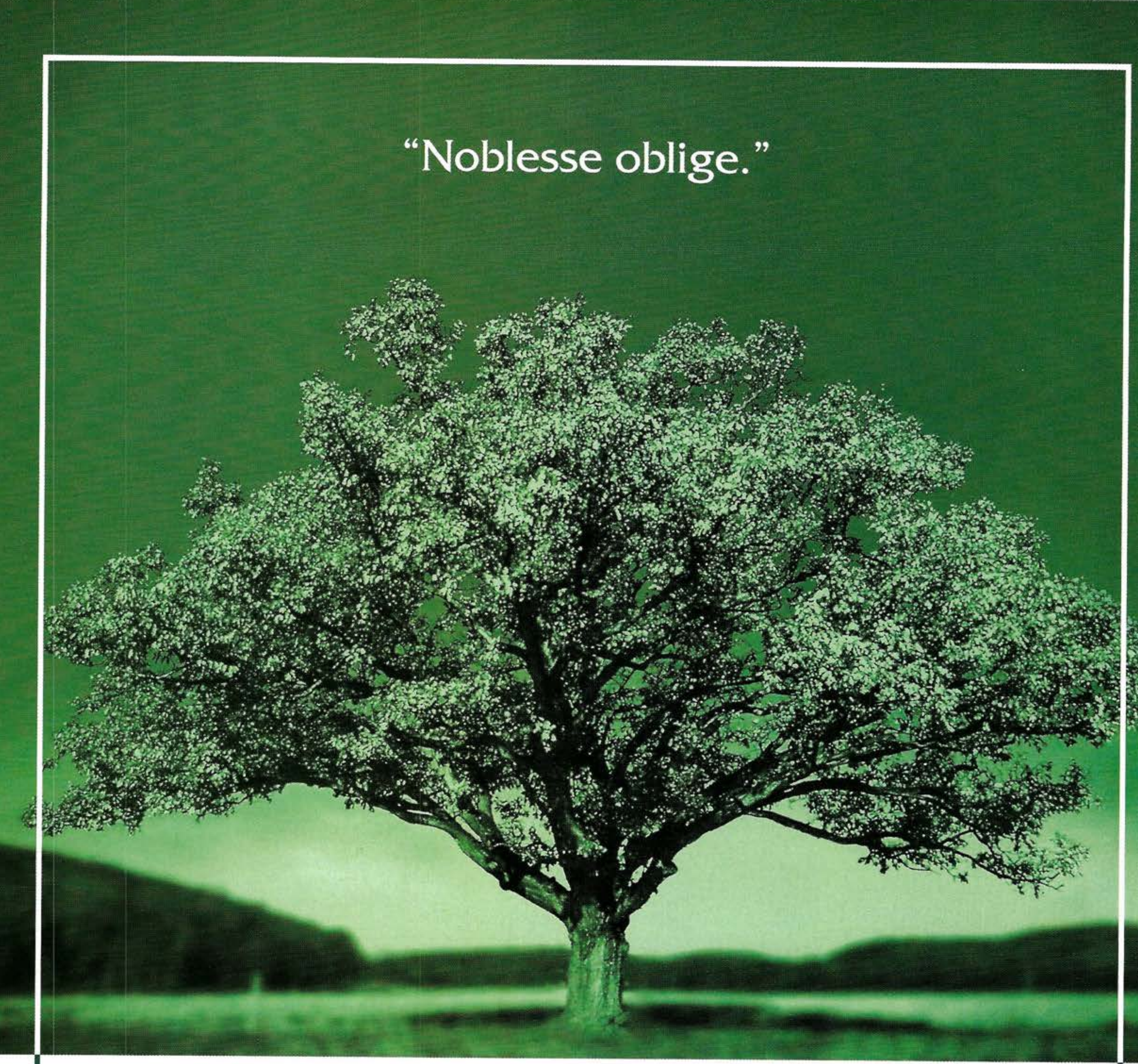

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# CONNOISSEUR

PHILIPPA SCOTT ON A SPLENDID DISPLAY OF OTTOMAN TENTS.
PLUS ART IN THE MUSEUMS AND SALEROOMS OF EUROPE AND AMERICA

## Mobile palaces

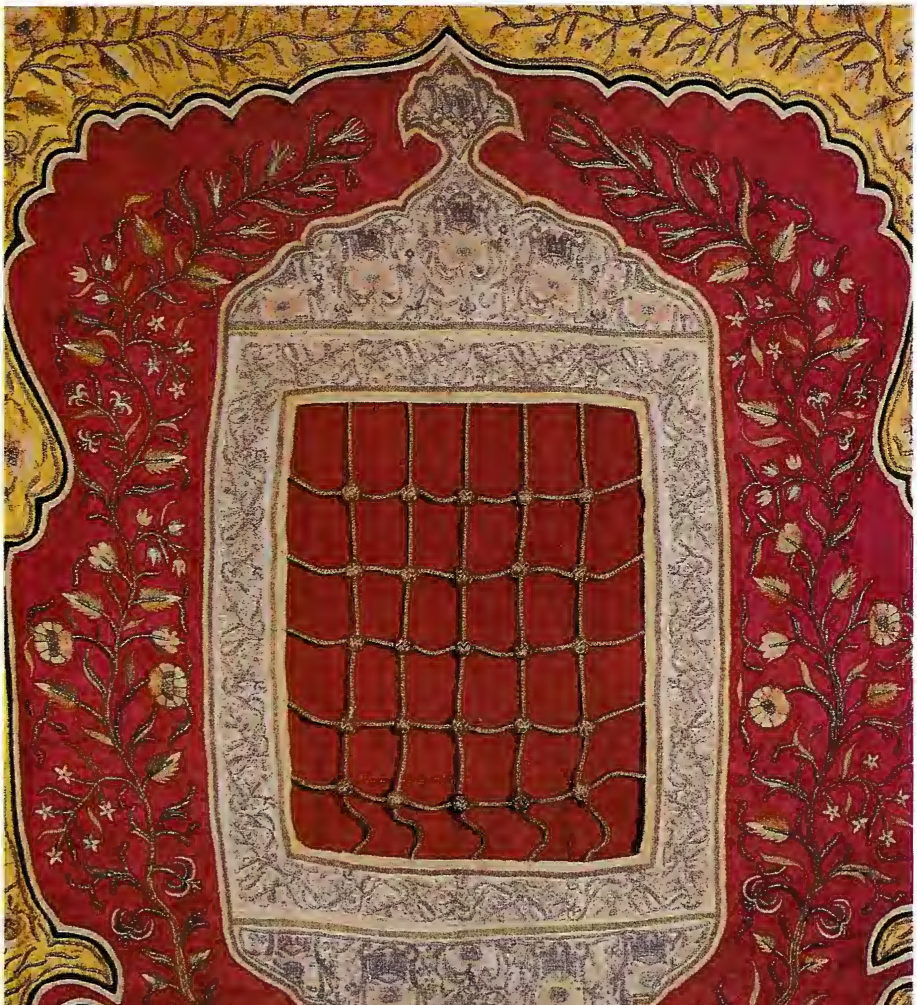
"The Ottomans lodge more grandly in the field than at home," wrote an early traveller, marvelling at the magnificence of Turkish tents.

The array of tents permanently displayed within Istanbul's Military Museum at Harbiye has long been one of the first stops on the connoisseur's tour of Istanbul. Now the storerooms of the Topkapı Palace have given up some of their treasures – many never displayed before – for the exhibition *Imperial Ottoman Tents*, which is being held in the imperial stables of the Topkapı until the end of May.

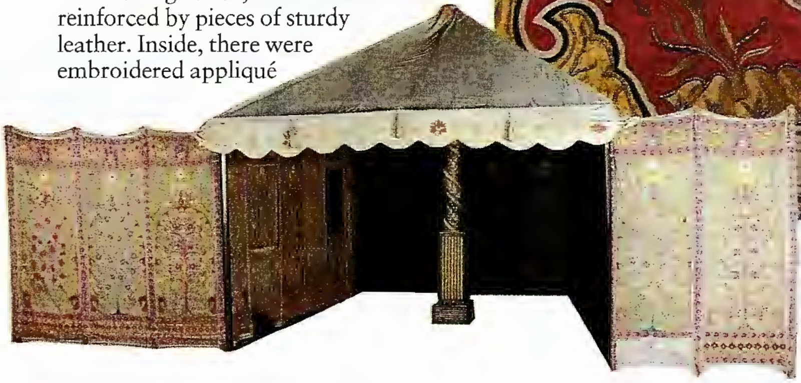
The exhibition coincides with the publication of an authoritative and splendidly illustrated book, *Otağı-ı Hümayun:The Ottoman Tent Complex*, by Professor Nurhan Atasoy.

The tent's heyday was the 16th and 17th centuries, but exquisite examples continued to be made until the beginning of the 20th century. The sultan, especially, lodged in the utmost grandeur in the field – his tent was a veritable mobile palace. Indeed the entire encampment was palatial in function, size, splendour and even design.

Ottoman tents and architecture are closely linked: the Topkapı Palace itself may be viewed as an Ottoman tent complex cast in stone, just as the tents are buildings woven in cloth. Tightly woven bands replaced all architectural load-bearing structures, acting as a framework. All guylines and cords were bound to these strong bands, which were further reinforced by pieces of sturdy leather. Inside, there were embroidered appliqué

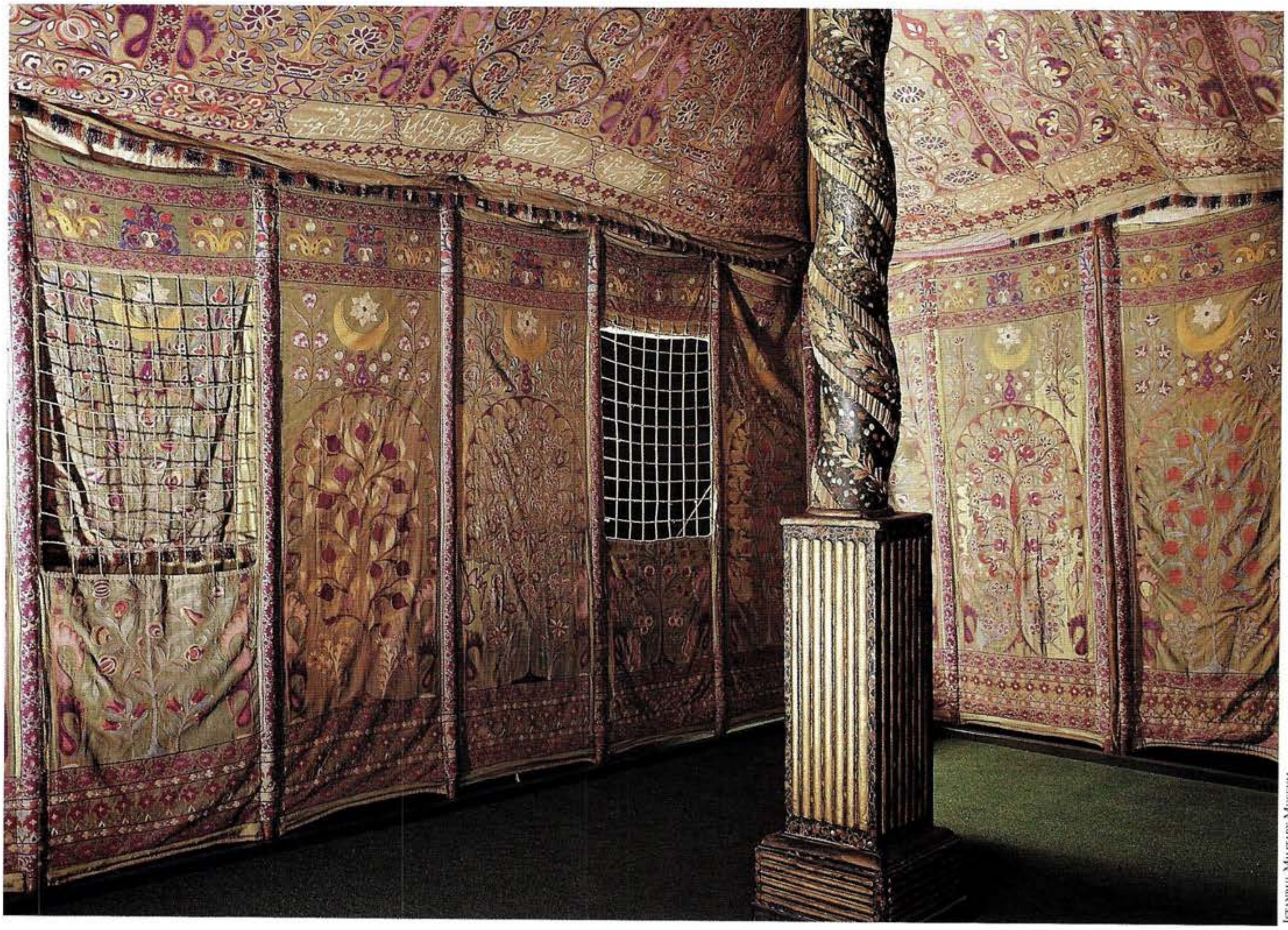


PHOTOGRAPHS BY SELAMET TAŞKIN AND BAHADIR TAŞKIN



ISTANBUL MILITARY MUSEUM

ABOVE, FANTASTIC FENESTRATION. THE WINDOW OF A 19TH-CENTURY OTTOMAN TENT, WITH GRILLES OF PLAITED GOLD FILAMENT. LEFT: CEREMONIAL TENT MADE FOR ABDÜLHAMID II IN 1886 (ALSO OVERLEAF, TOP)



ISTANBUL MILITARY MUSEUM

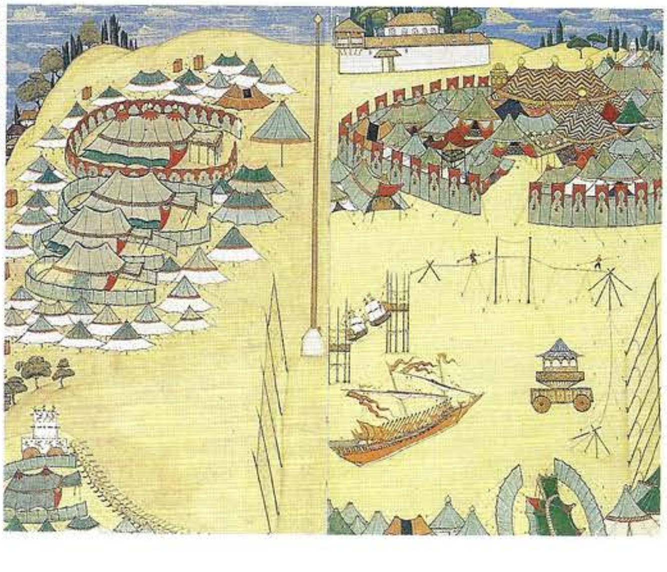
pillars, arches and arcades, and silk cord windows emulating iron grilles.

Camps, whether military or not – and many were purely civilian – could be enormous but were always strictly regimented in a logical, functional design. Round the periphery were toilet tents; miniatures show these as small squarish constructions of brown canvas, sometimes but not always covered. The kitchen tent was *nohudî*, or "the colour of chickpeas", a light terracotta. Paintings show this tent with a smoke-blackened centre. Bath tents were hexagonal and waterproofed with beeswax.

The sultan's tents were naturally the largest and most elaborate. To protect his privacy, routes of passage were flanked with textile screens, or

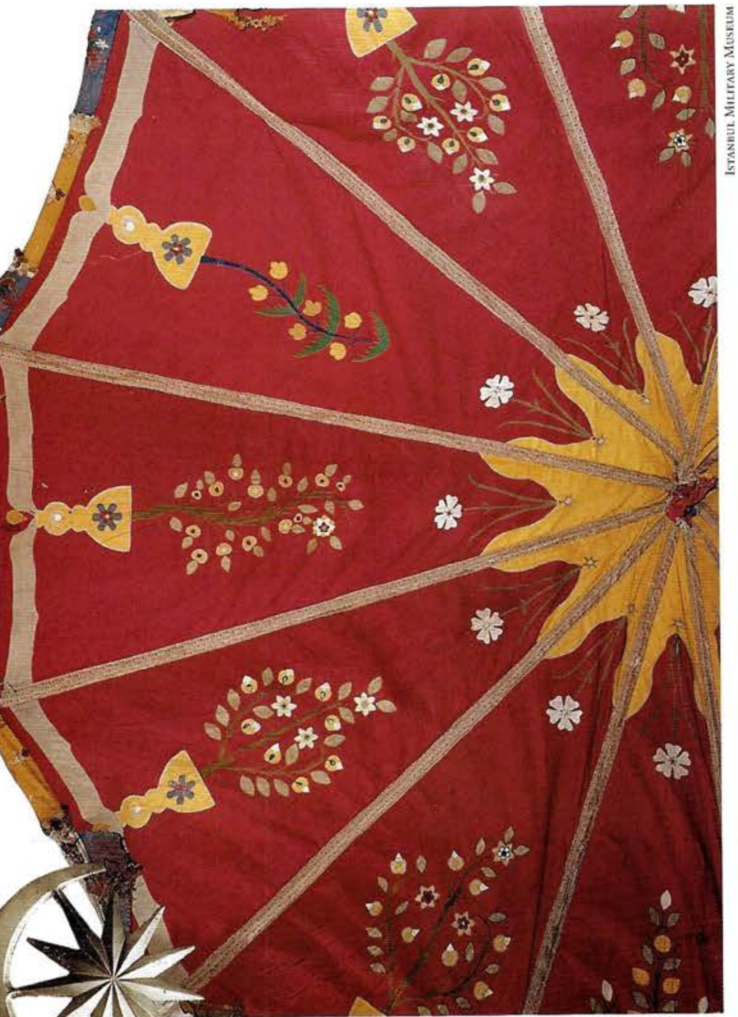
ABOVE: THE INTERIOR OF ABDÜLHAMID II'S TENT HAS FLOWERS AND FRUIT TREES IN LIGHT GREEN TAFFETA AND SATIN. BELOW: A CITY OF TENTS – INCLUDING AHMET III'S QUARTERS ENCIRCLED BY A WALL OF SILK – FROM THE 'SURNÂME-I SULTAN AHMAD HAN', THE CHRONICLE OF A PUBLIC FEAST HELD IN ISTANBUL IN 1720

TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM

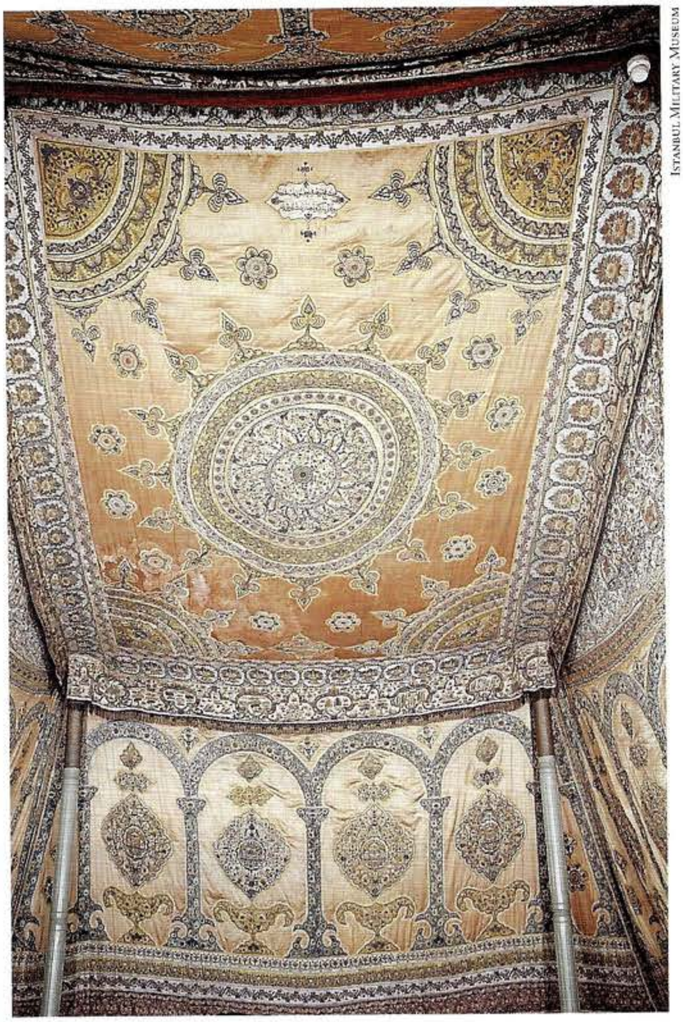


BELOW: 17TH-CENTURY HEMMED APPLIQUÉ NEEDLEWORK. QUILTING WAS NOT ONLY HIGHLY DECORATIVE; IT SERVED TO INSULATE THE TENT BY THICKENING THE WALLS

ISTANBUL MILITARY MUSEUM

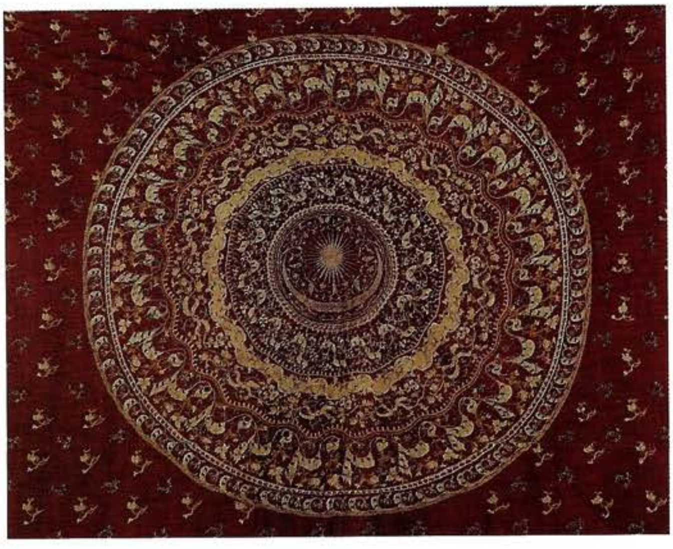


ISTANBUL MILITARY MUSEUM



ISTANBUL MILITARY MUSEUM

ABOVE: CEREMONIAL UMBRELLA (LEFT), EARLY 20TH CENTURY; IN MAHMUT II'S TENT OF 1809 (RIGHT) AN OUTER SHELL OF RED BROADCLOTH CONCEALS A SHIMMERING INTERIOR. BELOW: CENTRAL CEILING MEDALLION OF ANOTHER EARLY 19TH-CENTURY TENT. A CRESCENT FINIAL, LEFT, CAPPED EACH SUPPORTING COLUMN



TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM

*kandilli sokak*, which often had the added refinement of appliqué candle lamps, pillars and arcades.

The Tower of Justice, a raised pavilion reached by ladder which made a comfortable spectating lodge for the sultan, was in fact a prefabricated replica of the stone building of the same name at the Topkapı.

Making and maintaining tents was heavy work. They were regularly overhauled, and a record from 1716 indicates that one tent being repaired at the time was already a century old. Every sultan ordered for himself an accession tent which took several years to make.

The duties of the tent corps included transporting and setting up tents, as well as maintenance and storage. They were also responsible for making cushions, mattresses and draperies for all the imperial palaces, summer palaces and caiques. The tents were transported by camels wearing clanging bells; the tent-pitchers went ahead of the main party so that everything was ready when the sultan arrived.

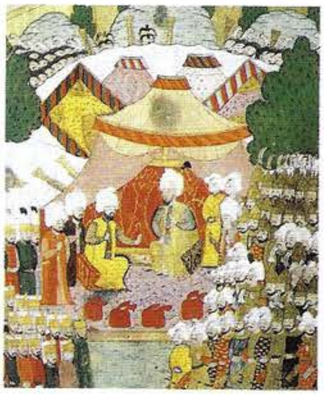
For centuries the corps was housed in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, originally a five-courtyard complex which over time fell into disrepair. Restoration was started in 1970 and completed in 1983, using miniatures depicting it in its original form for reference. The building now houses the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art.

As well as miniatures and the tents themselves, the Topkapı exhibition includes associated items such as tent emblems, elaborately decorated columns and ferrules, horsetail insignias (awarded as a symbol of imperial rank; the higher the rank, the greater the number of horsetails), and furnishings. There are floor coverings – carpets, kilims and needlework spreads – and other textiles such as throne and divan covers, cushions and pillows, curtains, storage sacks, bedding and prayer mats.

The army bivouacked for five months every year. At the last Siege of Vienna, in 1683, the Ottomans erected a canvas city beside the Austrian capital – bigger, and much better ordered, than Vienna itself. After the battle, when the Polish king Jan Sobieski III entered the camp, he wrote with awe of the tent of the grand vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha: "…and what delicacies he had in his tents, it is hard to describe. He had a bath, a garden and fountains, rabbits and cats, even a parrot, but this was flying, and we could not catch it…"

### WHERE TO SEE OTTOMAN TENTS

*Imperial Ottoman Tents* runs until May 21, 2001, at the Imperial Stables of the Topkapı Palace (open daily 9am–5pm except Tues). The Military Museum at Harbiye has a permanent exhibition (open daily 9am–5pm except Mon and Tues).



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TENT SUPREMACY: MINIATURE FROM TARIH-I FETH-I YEMEN (THE CONQUEST OF YEMEN), A CHRONICLE FROM 1584

EUROPEAN COLLECTIONS
Poland, Germany, Sweden, Hungary and Italy all have fine Ottoman tents, many taken at Vienna in 1683. The best, featured in Professor Atasoy's landmark book, are in:

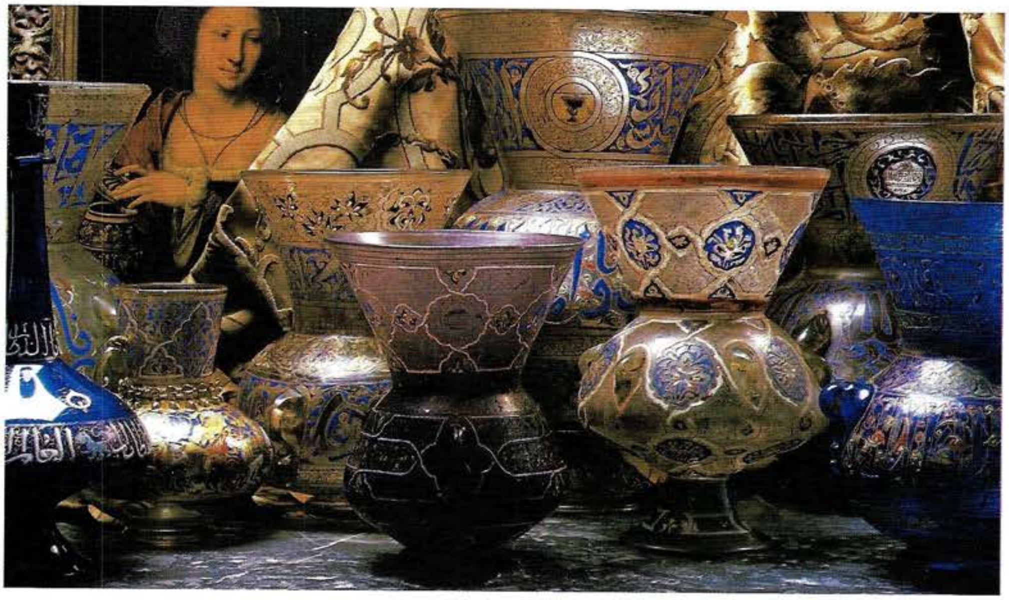
- CRACOW: National Museum; Czatoryski Museum; Wawel Chateau; Tarnow Regional Museum
- DRESDEN: Staatliche Kunstamlungen
- INGOLSTADT: Armeemuseum
- KARLSRUHE: Badisches Landesmuseum
- VIENNA: Heeresgeschtliches Museum; Kunsthistorisches Museum; Schloss Forchtenstein
- BUDAPEST: National Museum
- STOCKHOLM: Skokloster Chateau; Armemuseum; Nordiska Museet
- VENICE: Museo Storico Navale

BOOKS
*Otağ-ı Hümayun: The Ottoman Tent Complex*, by Nurhan Atasoy, published in Istanbul by Aygaz, is available to CORNUCOPIA subscribers for £55 (rrp £60) including postage worldwide.
Also about tents, but focusing on Central Asia, is *Felt Tents and Pavilions: The Nomadic Tradition and its Interaction with Princely Tentage* (2 vols) by Peter Andrews (Melisende and Cologne University, £90).

# AUCTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

## MAMLUK GLASS

Collection of the Late Baroness Batsheva de Rothschild
Christie's, London
December 14, 2000



CHRISTIE'S

The Rothschilds were prolific collectors of Islamic art in the 19th century, when a vogue for Orientalist interiors swept the salons of Paris. They would have displayed glass such as the examples on the right in specially created Moorish smoking rooms in their grand town houses. Branches of the family in France, Germany and Austria were all mad for this Mamluk glass, made in Egypt or Syria in the 13th and 14th centuries. In the rush to acquire these jugs, with their rounded bodies and flared mouths, the Rothschilds' advisers frequently failed to distinguish between extremely rare medieval pieces and convincing French 19th-century copies. Of the examples above, all from the collection formed by Baron Alphonse de Rothschild from the 1880s onwards, only four are genuine Mamluk.

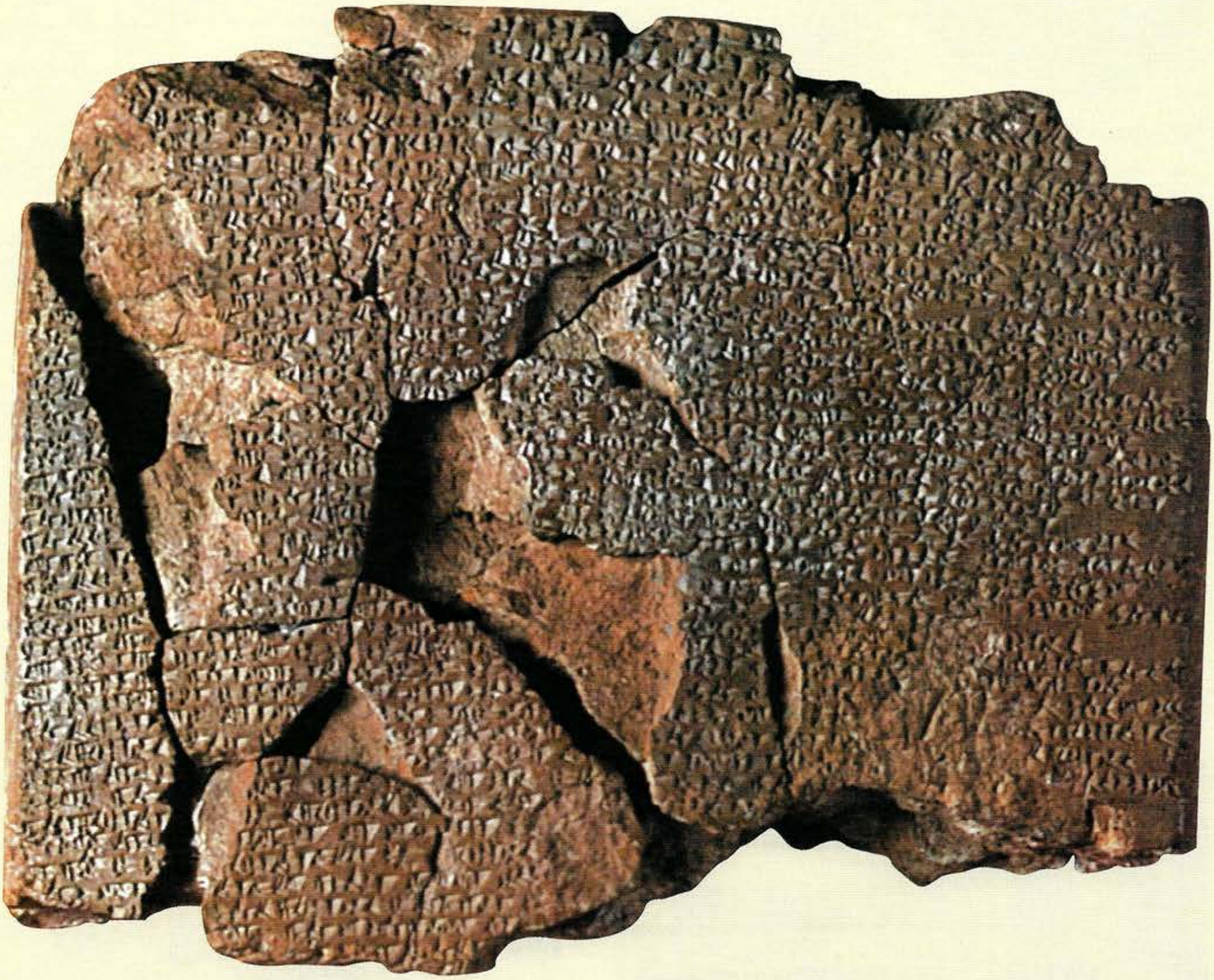
The deep blue bottle, far left, is one of the earliest examples, dating from before the period when the jugs took on their characteristic wide-mouthed design derived from metalwork. It is decorated with the heraldic lion, symbol of the first great Mamluk, Sultan Baybars (1260–77).

Of the same age is the gilded and enamelled jug to its right. Though shorter than the others, it is by far the most valuable. When the Baron bought it from the Duke of Hamilton in 1882 (at Christie's) for £2,730, it was the most expensive non-European work of art in the world. The other jugs for sale have estimates ranging from £4,000 for the 19th-century blue one on the far right up to a possible £800,000 for the tall pale jug with calligraphy just visible on the far left.

# Kadesh Treaty

***Found at Boğazköy (Hattusha) Middle Anatolian Period 1269***

**The first written treaty in history, containing the text of an agreement between the Hittites and the Egyptians. It is written on a clay tablet. Some parts are missing.**



The reopening of the renovated Museum of the Ancient Orient, which is a part of the İstanbul Archaeological Museums, was made possible with the support of Garanti Bank.

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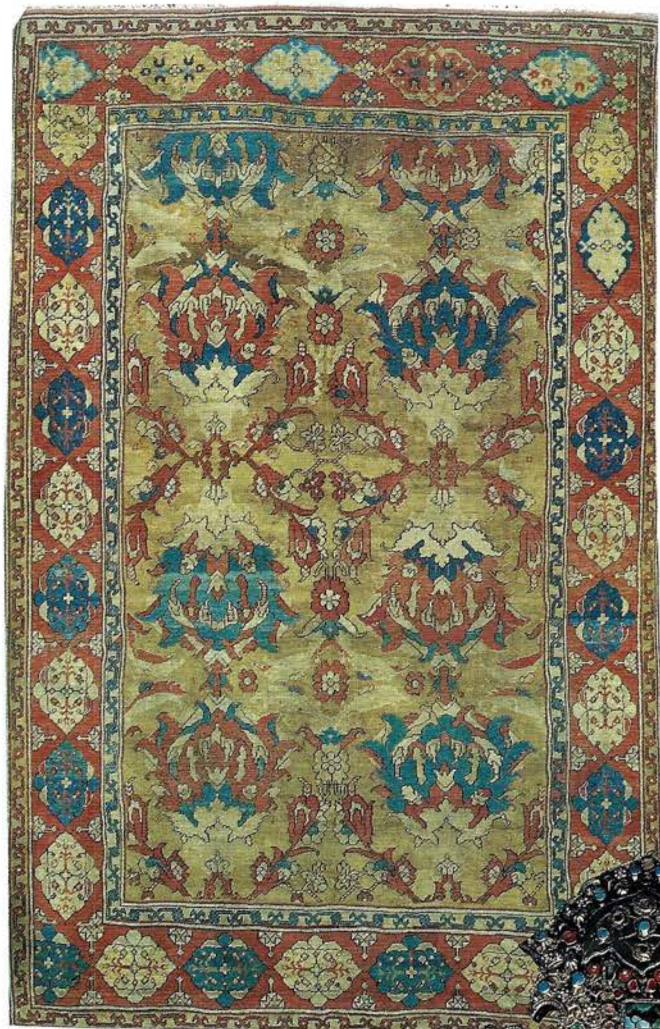
## BYZANTINE ART

Mary and Michael Jaharis Galleries for Byzantine Art, Metropolitan Museum, New York

The silver plate above, telling the story of David and Goliath, was made in Constantinople in 629–630 AD. Cast, hammered, engraved, punched and chased, it was discovered in Cyprus in 1902 and bequeathed to the Met by Pierpont Morgan. It is now part of the museum's dramatic new Byzantine gallery (below), which exhibits superb secular and religious art from across the Byzantine Empire. Some of the earliest Christian images are on display, as well as works from the surviving Greco-Roman tradition and examples of Judaic art.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM



CHRISTIE'S

## CARPETS

Davide Halevim: Magnificent Carpets and Tapestries
Christie's, London
February 14

The largest collection of rugs owned by one person ever seen at auction makes up this Valentine's Day sale. It promises to be a colourful event. The collection, built up over 30 years, is dramatically eclectic yet of exceptional quality. The lots – ranging in origin from Flanders to China but very much, say Christie's, in the stylish Italian taste – are being offered not by category but in a sequence for maximum visual impact. Fittingly perhaps, for Halevim himself is abandoning the rug trade to pursue a career in film.

A Franco-Flemish millefleurs tapestry (1490–1520) should fetch over £1 million, while a delicate 1880 pale green silk Yarkand from Turkestan should make a more modest £40,000. Among the Turkish rugs is the late 17th-century Smyrna carpet, left (est. £30,000–£50,0000). The handsome catalogue is a must for anyone serious about carpets.

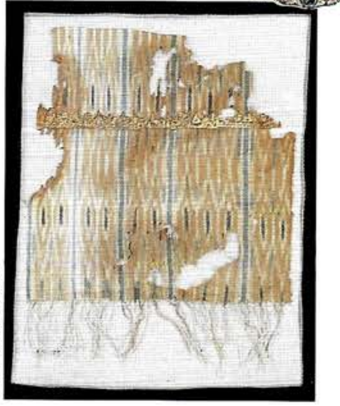
BRUNEI GALLERY

## TEXTILES

A Calligrapher's Art: Inscribed Ikats from Yemen, The Textile Museum, Washington, Jan 26–April 29

The museum is one of the world's best centres for the study of Islamic textiles, from robust tribal rugs to delicately patterned ikats. The fine 9th- or 10th-century ikat from Yemen (right) has kufic inscriptions in gold leaf and ink.

At the bolder end of the spectrum are the Anatolian flatweave rugs and bags in the Tribal Traditions show open until January 28.



THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

## COSTUME

Court and Conquest: Ottoman Origins and the Design for Handel's Tamerlano
Brunei Gallery, London,
January 24 – March 23

Costumes for a recent US production of Handel's opera about the conqueror Timur (Tamerlane) are on show side by side with the fine artefacts that inspired the designer, such as the ornate buckle above, from the Khalili Collection.

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collection
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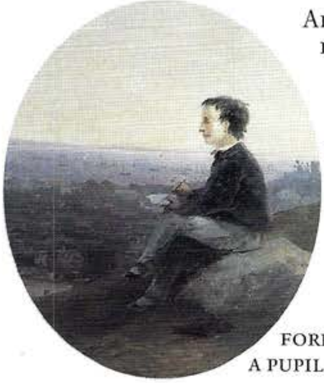
THE RUSSIAN ARTIST IVAN AIVAZOVSKY MAY HAVE BEEN DERIDED BY THE AVANT-GARDE, BUT HIS DREAMY SEASCAPES A

# PAINTER TO FOUR TSARS,

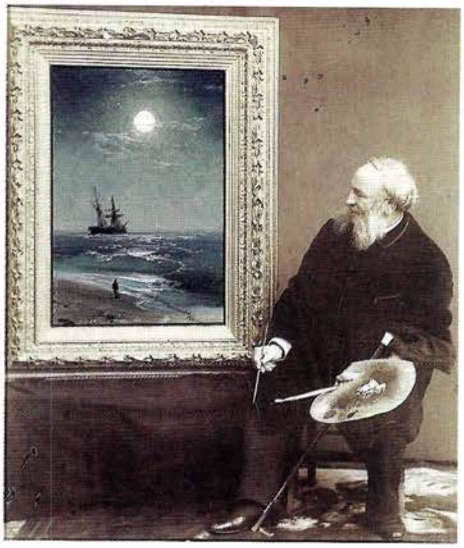


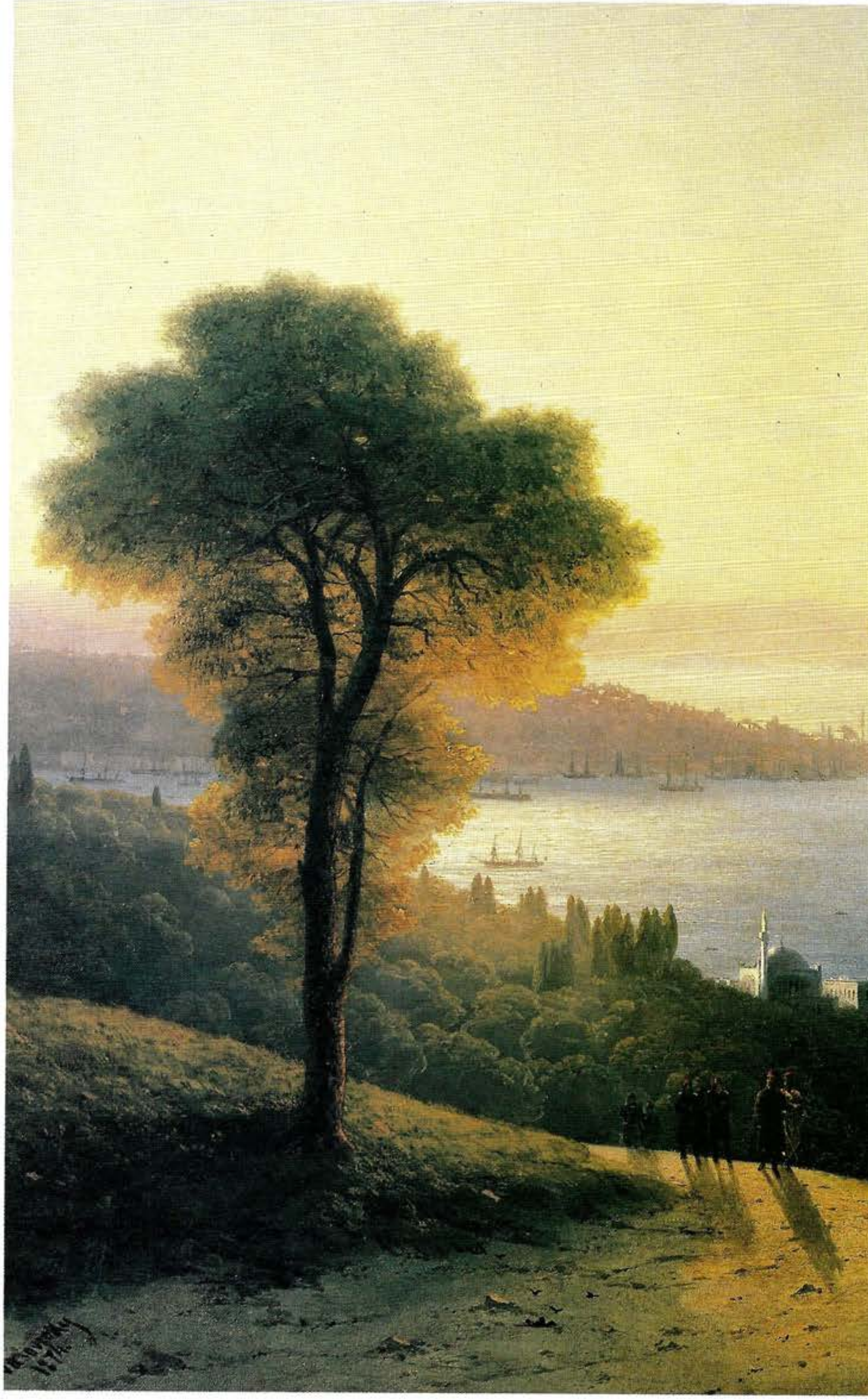
AIVAZOVSKY THE PROGIDY, LEFT. BELOW: THE MASTER IN HIS ATELIER. RIGHT: A VIEW OF THE BOSPHORUS FROM YILDIZ. SULTAN ABDÜLAZIZ, SEEN IN THE FOREGROUND, WAS A PUPIL OF THE ARTIST

Seas, Cities and Dreams:
The Paintings of Aivazovsky (1817–1900)
İş Sanat Gallery, Istanbul
January 19 – February 28, 2001

Few artists have been as convincing in the depiction of water as the Crimean-born painter Ivan Aivazovsky. His extraordinary talent, combined with an ox-like stamina and astute business sense, lifted him out of the provincial poverty of his birthplace to the centre of the European cultural stage. By the end of a lifetime that spanned almost the entire nineteenth century, his patrons included four Russian emperors, two Ottoman sultans and the Pope. Derided by the intellectual avant-garde, he was adored by the new middle classes from Alexandria to St Petersburg.

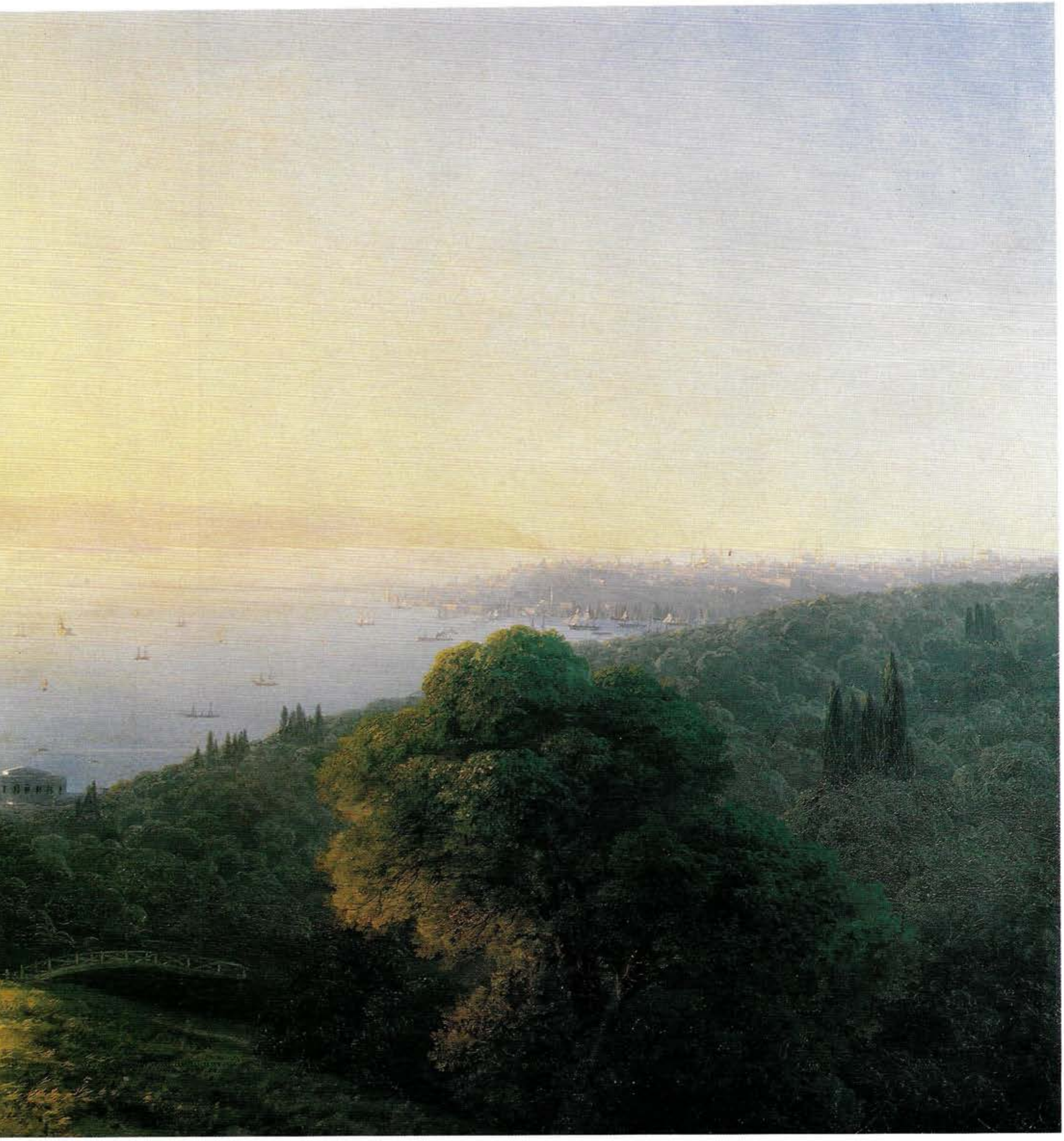
Aivazovsky worked swiftly and ceaselessly, often painting entire pictures in

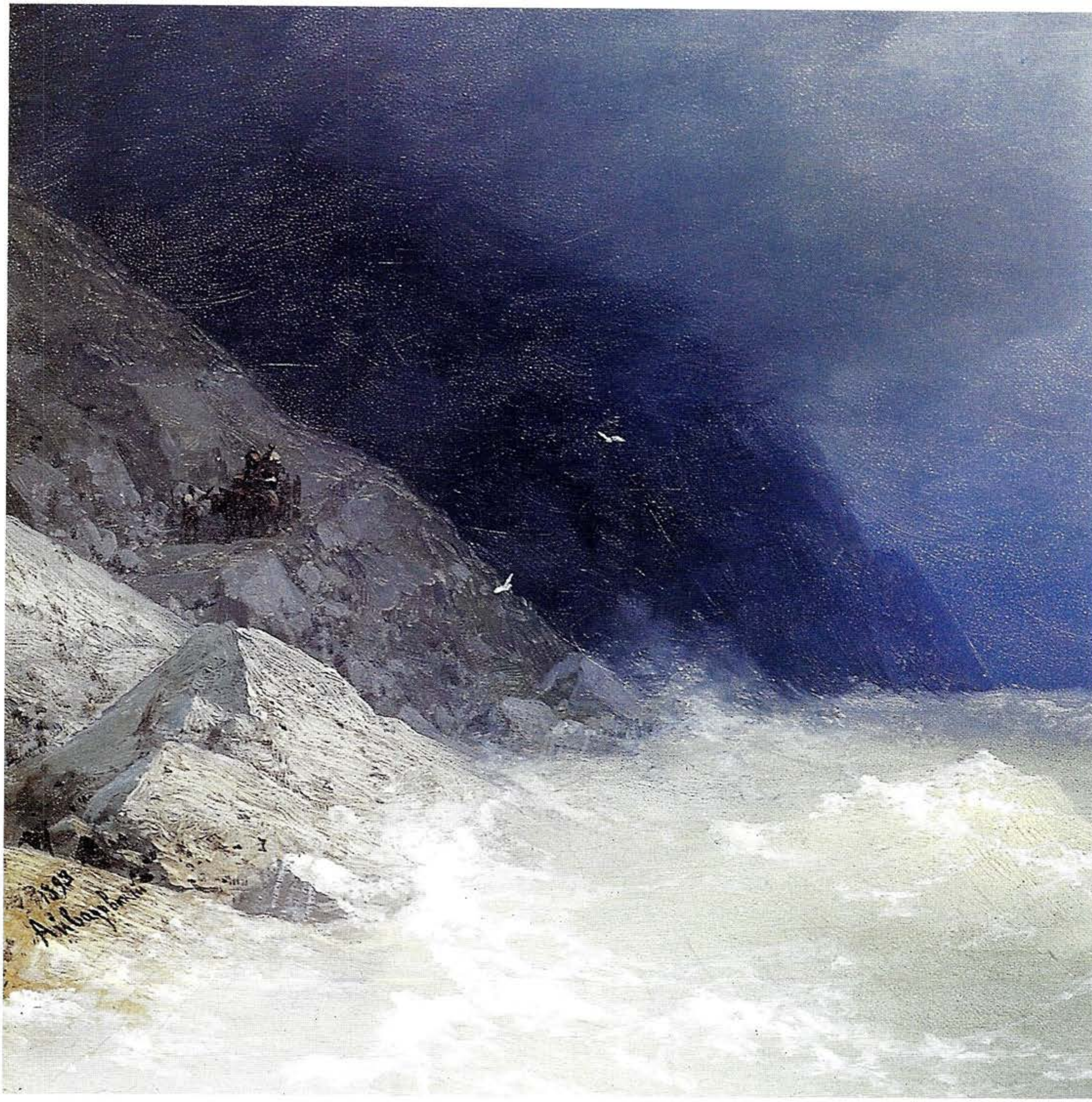




OSPHERIC PANORAMAS WON HIM PATRONS IN HIGH PLACES. IVAN SAMARINE REDISCOVERS A 19TH-CENTURY VIRTUOSO

# TWO SULTANS AND A POPE

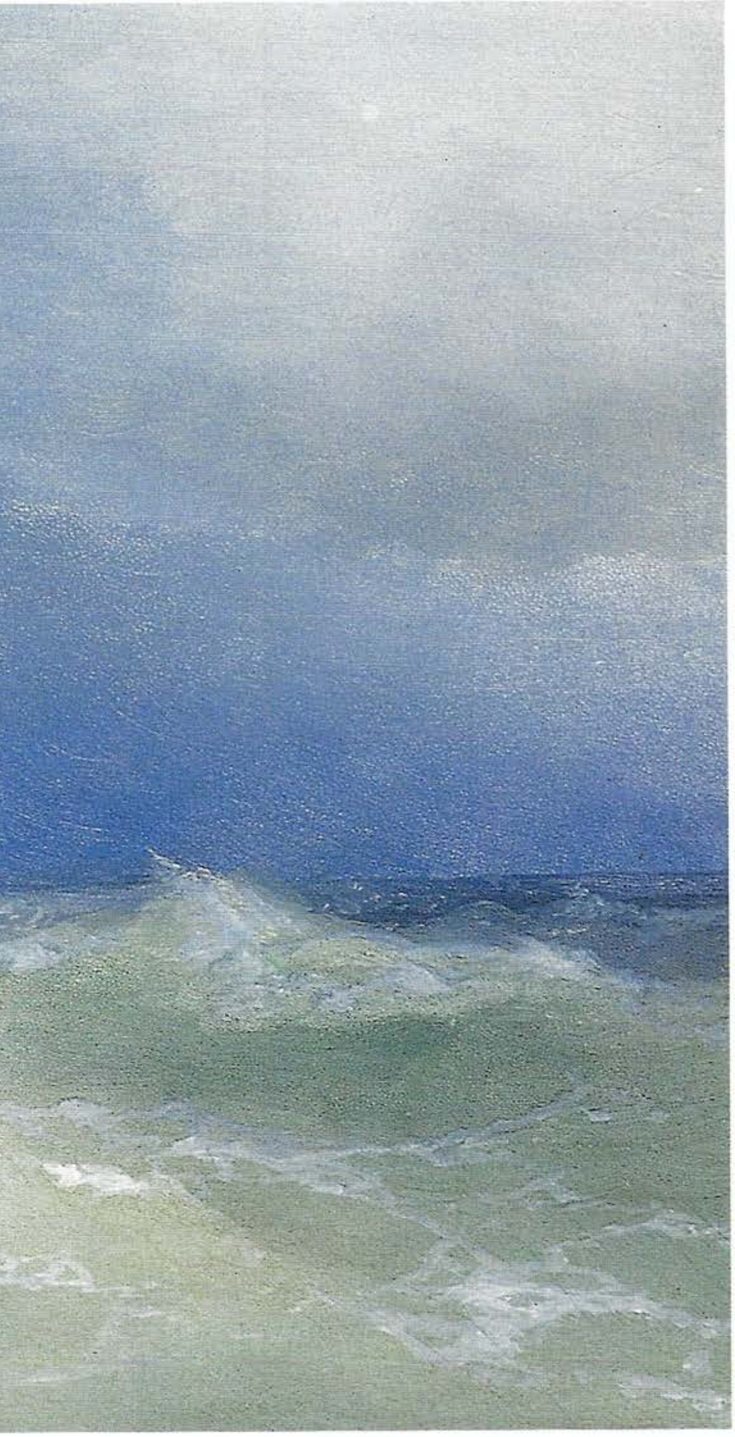


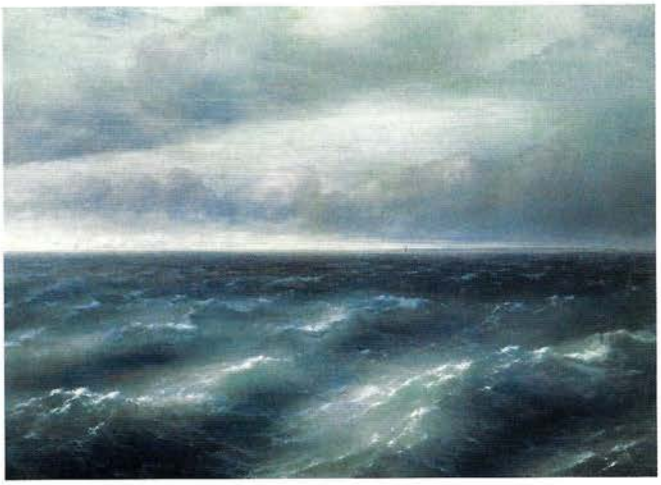


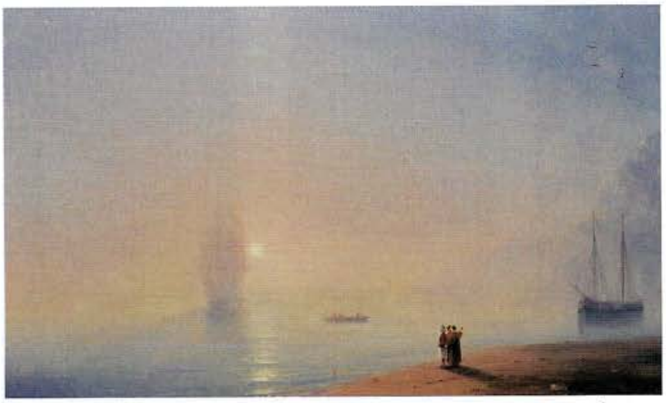
a day. This was out of both habit and necessity: the thinly applied colour washes that are the trademark of his skies and the foundation for his calm seas had to be applied in one session if they were to appear seamless. By his own estimate he painted 6,000 pictures; this number has been increased severalfold by an international industry of fakers. Inevitably, Aivazovsky's work is uneven, and his detractors' frequent accusation that he repeated himself is difficult to deny. His talent was that of a master craftsman, whose profound knowledge of his tools allowed him to conjure up dramatic images whenever he wished.

He nearly always worked in his studio in the Crimea, never painting from nature, and boasted that "A storm that I saw off the coast of Italy… I moved to some place in the Crimea or the Caucasus; with moon-rays reflected in the waters of the Bosphorus, I light up Sevastapol."

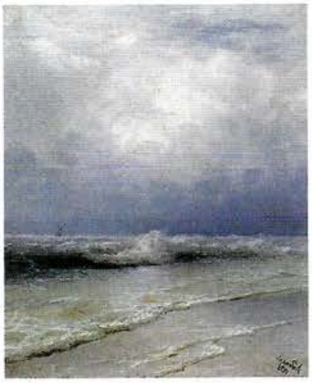
Aivasovsky's technique served him best for seas and townscapes. When the two are combined, as in his panoramas of Istanbul (which he visited frequently, and where he was befriended by Sultan Abdülaziz, whom he taught to paint), his art is unsurpassed.◆

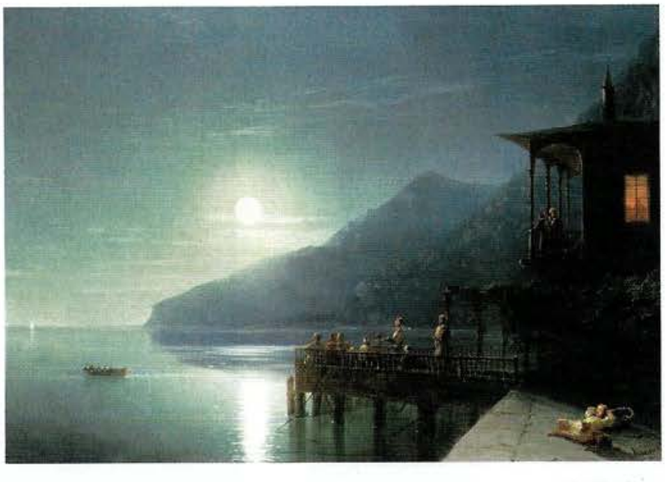




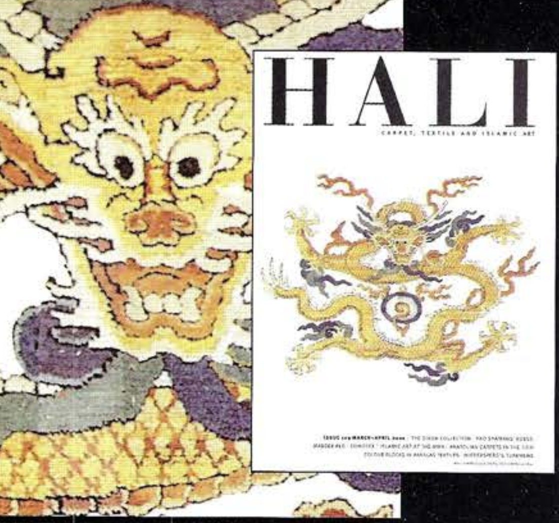


FOR FORTY YEARS AIVAZOVSKY NEVER TIRED OF THE MOODS OF THE SEA. LEFT: 'ROUGH SEA OFF ROCKY COAST', 1893. TOP: 'THE BLACK SEA', 1881. ABOVE: 'CRIMEAN COAST', 1853. BELOW LEFT: 'BREAKERS ON A STORMY DAY', 1893. BELOW: 'A MOONLIT NIGHT ON THE CRIMEAN COAST', 1875. PAINTINGS SUCH AS THESE WERE IN HUGE DEMAND AND IN A MATTER OF MINUTES THE ARTIST WOULD MAKE MINIATURE COPIES TO GIVE TO GUESTS AT THE LAVISH DINNER PARTIES HE HELD IN HIS NATIVE CRIMEA. HE CAME FROM THEODOSIA, A TOWN KNOWN AS 'LITTLE ISTANBUL' THAT RETAINED STRONG OTTOMAN INFLUENCE





- *Seas, Cities and Dreams: The Paintings of Ivan Aivazovsky' by Gianni Caffiero and Ivan Samarine is published by Alexandria Press, London. The Turkish edition is in association with Türkiye İş Bankası. The English edition, in association with Laurence King (rrp £65), is offered to Cornucopia subscribers at £58.50 incl postage*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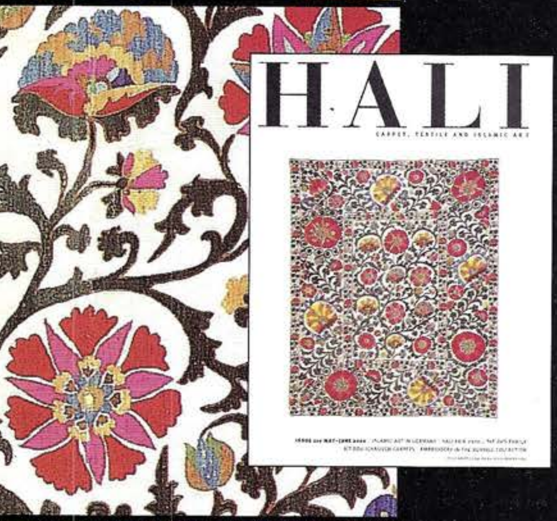
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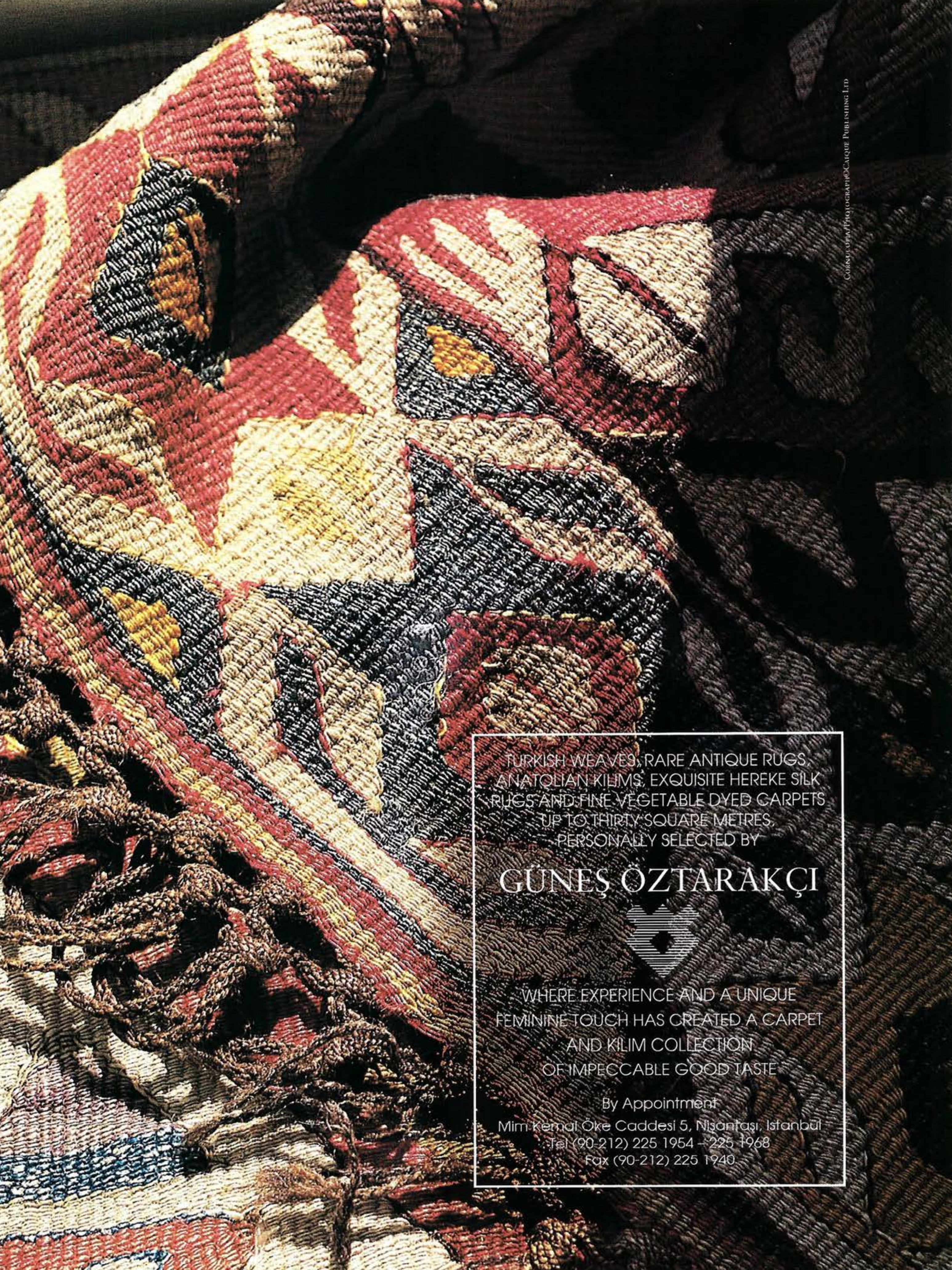

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# Music to a Sultan's ear

VISITORS TO 1830S ISTANBUL WERE ASTONISHED TO HEAR THE STRAINS OF ROSSINI AND DONIZETTI PERFORMED BY TURKISH MUSICIANS. AS EMRE ARACI REVEALS, WESTERN MUSIC WAS THE PASSION OF SULTAN MAHMUD II

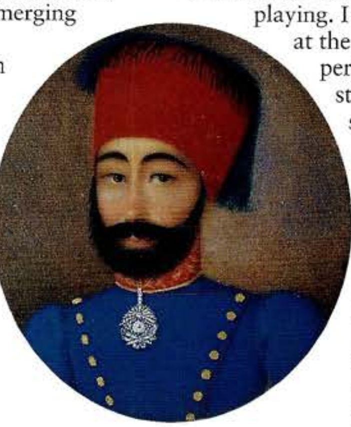
An intriguing letter arrived at the Paris offices of the French music journal *Le Ménestrel* in the autumn of 1836, with an exotic provenance: Constantinople. Addressed to the editor, it was from a "faithful subscriber" who signed himself simply "Ed. de V…"; in all likelihood he was a member of the Christian community of Pera.

"In Constantinople the ancient Turkish music dies in agony," he proclaimed. To this revelation he added: "Sultan Mahmoud loves Italian music and has introduced it in his armies. This is only one of his reforms; the brother of Donizetti is the director of his music, and since they do not have much music, they always play one particular work, called *The March of the Sultan*, which is said to have been composed by him. He loves the piano so much that he has ordered many instruments from Vienna for his ladies. I do not know how they will learn to play, since no one is permitted to approach them."

The editor of *Le Ménestrel* was further astounded by the news that Sultan Mahmud, who for some time had been composing music himself, was contemplating sending his manuscripts to the French journal for possible publication. Musical links between Turkey and France at the time seem to have been strong, for in the same year we come across references to a group of sixty Parisian musicians being requested to perform in Istanbul at the wedding ceremony of one of the daughters of the Sultan.

"European civilisation" were the buzzwords of the reforming Sultan and his entourage, who had given up their kaftans and turbans for tight frock coats and the fez, the new official headgear for bureaucrats, officers and soldiers of the empire. Unsurprisingly, in the spirit of reform that followed the dismemberment in 1826 of the Janissaries, with their *mehter* bands, the musical palette of the emerging Ottoman élite gradually began to acquire a taste for *musique européenne*.

The Sultan himself seems to have taken a personal interest in encouraging this tradition and incorporating it into the social fabric of his court and his newly created army. Thus the centuries-old bands of the Janissaries had to give way to a European-style military band under the direction of an Italian: Giuseppe Donizetti (1788–1856), who was later created a pasha. It is therefore not surprising to find travellers to the Levant experiencing the shock of hearing the music of Rossini or Gaetano Donizetti performed by Turkish youths on the banks of the Bosphorus, against a perfect backdrop of newly painted villas – just as Byron had anticipated in *Don Juan* thirty years earlier, describing the setting as "a pretty opera-scene".



LOOKING WEST: MAHMUD II

A British naval officer, Adolphus Slade, witnessed and recorded the early achievements of Donizetti's modest band during one of many visits to the city in the 1830s: "The strains of a military band, and, unexpected treat to me on the banks of the Bosphorus, we heard Rossini's music, executed in a manner very creditable to Professor Signor Donizetti. We rose and went down to the palace quay, on which the band was playing. I was surprised at the youth of the performers… and still more surprised on finding that they were the royal pages, thus instructed for the Sultan's amusement. Their aptitude in learning, which Donizetti informed me would have been remarkable even in Italy, showed that the Turks are naturally musical." (Sir Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece etc, and of a cruise in the Black Sea with Capitan Pasha in the years 1829, 1830 and 1831*).

Sultan Mahmud's passion for European music was shared by his son and successor, Abdülmecid, host to many travelling virtuosos of the period who came to perform at his palace – the most illustrious being Franz Liszt in 1847. Despite ill health and the humiliating defeat of his armies by the rebellious governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali, Mahmud continued his musical reforms until his final days.

Ironically, the last musical performance at his court was perhaps one of the first examples of a new generation of Turkish musicians who could play major works from the classical European repertoire, as reported in the *Musical World* of June 5, 1839: "Where will the march of mind and music stop? The gods have made his Sublimity, Mahmoud, musical and in return he has determined to infuse his tastes into his harem. With this view he has recently given a concert to the fair ones, at which a young Turk, who had acquired his education at Paris, played among other pieces one of Beethoven's sonatas with variations, which enraptured the assembly and drew down thunders of applause."

Sultan Mahmud died a few weeks after this concert, at the age of fifty-four.

## OTTOMAN COURT MUSIC

*Dr Emre Aracı is a composer and musicologist who is an expert on Ottoman court music of the nineteenth century. He has arranged and directed the CD 'European Music at the Ottoman Court', performed by the London Academy of Ottoman Court Music (Kalan Records). Cornucopia Subscribers can obtain the CD for the special price of £4.99 including postage worldwide.*

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# BOOKS

THE OTTOMANS IN CRETE... MONGOL MEAT AND MEDICINE... THE ROMANTIC LIFE OF A GREAT POET... ISLAM IN TURKEY IN THE 1990S

## Cretan crossroads

A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean
By Molly Greene
Princeton University, £22

On September 6, 1669, the Ottoman grand vizier Köprülü Fazıl Ahmet Pasha received the keys of Crete's main city, Candia (the modern Herakleion), from the departing Venetian commander. The last 4,000 inhabitants of Venetian Candia boarded ships in silence and sailed away. Only two Greek priests, three Jews and a handful of Venetian soldiers who converted to Islam were left behind.

Köprülü then took over a ghost town, desolated by two years of daily bombardment, the climax of a painful war of conquest begun in 1645. Crete had belonged to Venice for 465 years, ever since the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders in 1204.

On another September 6, 230 years later, the end of Ottoman rule finally came in an unsuccessful uprising by the Muslims of Candia against the four powers whose fleets had occupied Crete.

Ottoman Crete looks from a distance like a classic illustration of several well-known ideas in Near Eastern history. One is the "clash of civilisations" between Christianity and Islam. Another is the Greek notion of *Turkocratia* (Turkish rule) as a time of dire regression. Certainly during the last phase of Venetian rule, Crete was a cultural powerhouse. Ottoman Crete produced no literature and surprisingly little architecture.

And yet, seen through the prism of the social and economic historian, the changes may have been much less drastic than hitherto thought. That, at least, is the argument of Molly Greene's *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, a meticulous examination of documentary records from the first decades of Ottoman rule in Crete.

Greene, a social and economic historian in the Hellenic studies department at Princeton, sees both Venice and the Ottoman Empire as representatives of an *ancien régime* of the Mediterranean which was losing ground under the growing impact of the West, represented then by France. The loss of Crete was a blow from which the Venetians never recovered. For the Ottomans, the conquest of Crete, barring a few temporary incursions into Ukraine, was the last they ever made.

The Ottoman conquest halted the "Cretan Renaissance" but the towns seem to have recovered fairly quickly. Local merchants continued to make fortunes along patterns very similar to those of late-Venetian times. Postwar conditions in the countryside were uneven and not uniformly bleak, patterns of rural prosperity and poverty closely following those of the last century of Venetian rule. For the ordinary Cretan Greeks, Ottoman rule brought one big improvement: their new masters did not use them as galley slaves.

Yet many of the problems the Venetians had faced on Crete also troubled the Ottomans: chronic piracy (one of the reasons why the Ottomans took the island), limited control, especially on the mountainous south coast, and depopulation.

One of the main changes, of course, was the appearance of a Muslim population on the island, almost entirely the result of conversions rather than settlement. Muslims may have made up a third or even half of the population by the early eighteenth century, but Greene downplays the idea of a society polarised along religious lines.

Court records, charters, merchants' records, cadastral surveys, and even the reports of Venetian spies at the *divans* of the pashas of Crete are used by Molly Greene with skill and imagination to build up a subtle and convincing picture of local life. Ottoman sovereignty was still not to be taken for granted: and loyalties and even religions could be swapped and swapped back again later. Even some Ottoman officials may have had lines of communication with the Venetians.

Greene sees Ottoman Crete as a world of surprising energy and vigour, with blurred boundaries between religious communities. But it was "a world on its last legs". Both Venetians and Ottomans belonged to a pre-modern time of mixed nationalities and religions, where an Italian might end up as an Ottoman. The French merchants and diplomats who succeeded the Venetians in Crete in the eighteenth century separated Cretans into distinct national groups in their reports. The age of nationalism and the clash of civilisations was about to arrive in earnest.

DAVID BARCHARD

## Dining with the Mongols

A Soup for the Qan:
Chinese Dietary Medicine of the Mongol Era as Seen in Hu Szu-hui's Yin-shan Cheng-yao
Ed. Paul D. Buell and Eugene N. Anderson
Kegan Paul, £150

In 1206 the Mongol Temüjin, having defeated his rivals, took the title of Cinggis [Universal] qan, more familiar in the West as Genghis Khan. After his death in 1227 his sons spread his empire to China, Turkestan, Siberia, Manchuria, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, Anatolia, Tibet and part of Vietnam. By 1276 Qubilai-qan (Kublai Khan), the last of the Mongol rulers to be born in the steppes, had conquered all China and established the Yuan dynasty. Although he absorbed numerous influences from China, he maintained many trappings of the steppe life of Mongolia. In 1330 Hu Szu-hui, imperial dietary physician to a number of Qubilai's short-lived successors, presented his *Yin-shan Cheng-yao* (Proper and Essential Things for the Emperor's Food and Drink) to the emperor of the day.

*A Soup for the Qan* is a cookery book with a

Antalya?

difference, in that it gives the medicinal properties of each recipe. The theme is healthy eating to prevent debility and disease; at the end of the book, remedies are described. Such was the spread of the Mongol empire that feasts would include dishes of great refinement from Baghdad, Kashmir and China, with robust offerings of wildfowl from Manchuria and mutton and game from Mongolia itself. The *Yin-shan Cheng-yao* was intended to put the Mongolian vision of the empire into edible form.

Hu Szu-hui, whose name is probably a Chinese form of the Turkish Qusqi, was a Uighur from Ningxia in northwest China. He wrote in Chinese, but included many Turkish and Mongolian words in his text, which has here been translated into very readable English. Much of the book copies Chinese and Middle Eastern medical classics; what is of special interest is the inclusion of Mongolian and Turkish traditional food and medicine.

Mongolian food was, and still is, based on mutton, marmot, venison, wild berries, roots and herbs, with some dried legumes and wild grains – the food of the nomadic hunter-gatherer. There were no pigs, chickens merely blew away in the wind, and of fresh vegetables there were none. Making up for their absence was an enormous range of milk products from mares and ewes. Nomad food in the steppes was of necessity basic but, with the westward spread of the empire and the settling of the conquering Mongols into city life, refinement and elaboration were imported from Turkestan and Persia in the form of spices, grains and pastas. These combined well with the original Mongolian elements to form the nouvelle cuisine of the day.

The principle behind the *Yin-shan Cheng-yao*, which synthesises the Chinese idea of the balance of Yin and Yang with the Greek notion of the balance of the four humours, is that the "Five Flavours" should accord with the "Five Viscera". If the Five Viscera are in balance, the blood and *qi* (body energy) will flourish and the body will thus protect itself from disease.

The lengthy introduction by Buell and Anderson is remarkable. It gives a history of the Mongol empire, notes on Mongolian steppe life and an exposition of Hu's medical and nutritional theories. It classifies the recipes according to their Turkish, Middle Eastern, Mongolian or Chinese origins and explains how the reader can try them at home, with suggestions as to what to do if your butcher does not sell wolf meat. A remarkable display of cross-disciplinary erudition combined with sheer fun, it is a joy to read.

The first chapter of the text of the *Yin-shan Cheng-yao* opens with a homily on the importance of moderation and balance in eating and drinking, with a hint that if Qubilai's sons had followed these precepts they might have lived longer.

General advice includes injunctions against eating heavily at night (Chinese), defecating or urinating towards the northwest (Mongolian), dozing during the daytime, and washing the head after eating one's fill. Pregnant women are advised not to eat mulberries or duck eggs, which cause breech births; or eating donkey meat, which will cause the child to be late. Wet-nurses should avoid eating fresh aubergine or cucumber if the child is constipated. The taking of strong liquor leads to corruption of the bowels and stomach, soaking of the marrow, steaming of the sinews and other dire consequences.

There follow a number of recipes for "Strange Delicacies of Combined Flavours", such as Barley Soup, which warms the spleen and stomach, controls polydipsia, removes abdominal distension; Long Bottle Gourd and Mutton Soup, good for diabetes and clearing the waterworks; Bear Soup, for treating migratory arthralgia and foot problems; Sheep's Heart and Saffron for irregular heartbeat and depression. For pure pleasure are recommended horse stomach and intestines, roast curlew or wild goose roasted inside a sheep's stomach with coriander and onions.

Poisonous and to be avoided are an animal with a jutting tail, a black chicken with a white head, a sheep with six horns, a horse which grows a horn, meat which moves when put into water and, somewhat surreally, a fish which has eyelashes.

The Chinese text contains illustrations of various animals and plants with notes on their properties. Horse meat thickens the bones and gives energy to the waist and knees; its skull, used as a pillow, enables the user to do without much sleep; its heart is good for depression. Wild camel meat is good for the skin. Bear meat, particularly the paw, gives resistance to wind and cold. Dog meat tranquillises the Five Viscera and is good for the pulse, but should not be eaten with garlic. Mandarin duck soup will make an unwilling woman willing.

The long appendix will be of interest to Turkish linguists and historians; it shows that many of the words used in the Chinese text for grains, breads and pastas are Turkic and that they fall just as naturally into the Chinese text as "spaghetti" does into English. However, it passes over the linguistic curiosity that Mongolian *ayran* is not diluted yoghurt (as in Turkish) but an alcoholic distillation of *airaq* or fermented mare's milk.

This encyclopaedic book is a shining example of scholarship turning a very technical text, requiring extremely precise translation by teams of linguists, into a book which is just as accessible, informative and entertaining to the general reader as it is to the specialist. I intend no insult to the authors by saying that, for pure pleasure as bedside reading to be dipped into, this book could not be bettered.

ANTONY WYNN

## Poetic justice

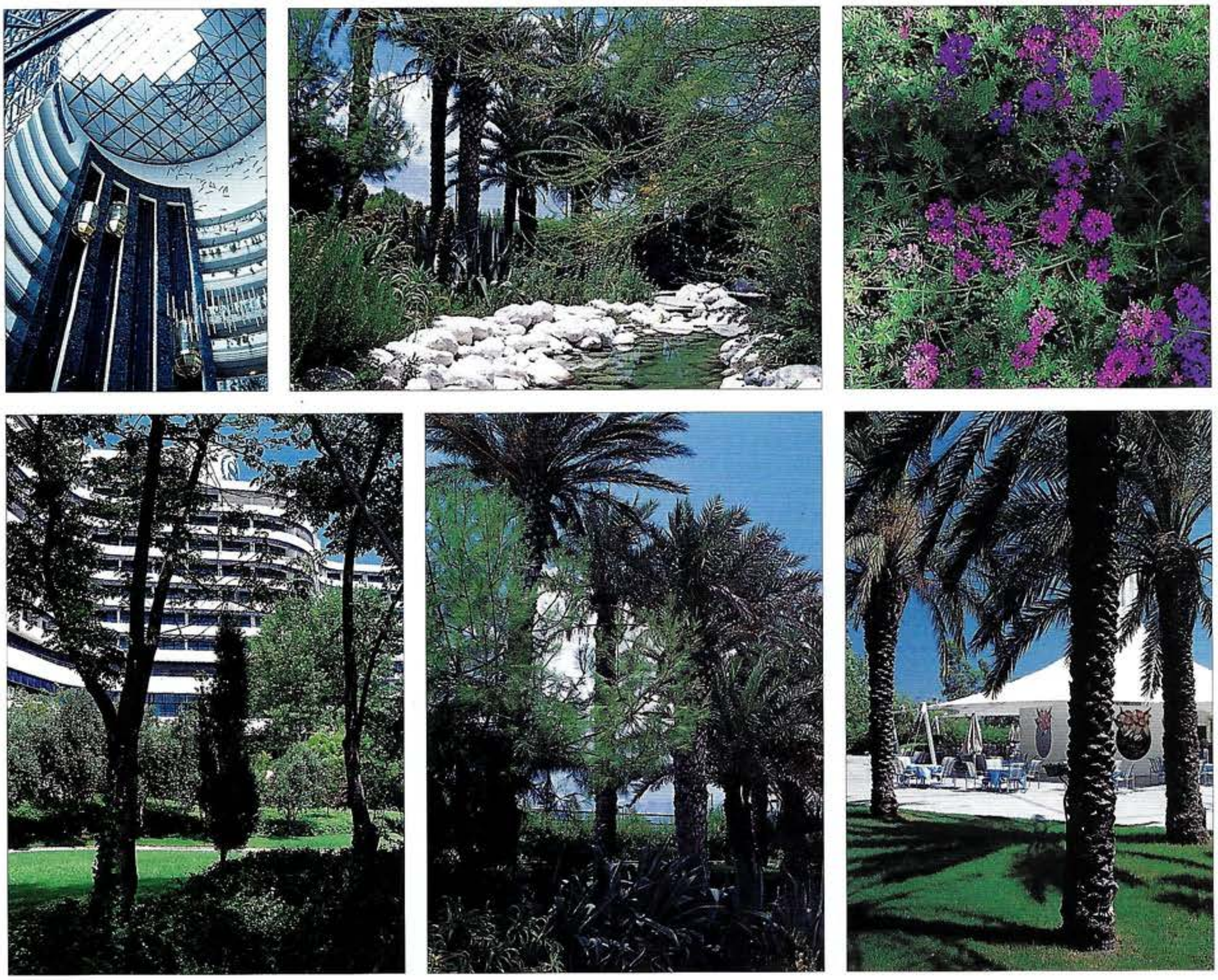
Romantic Communist:
The Life and Works
of Nazım Hikmet
By Saime Göksu and
Edward Timms, Hurst, £20

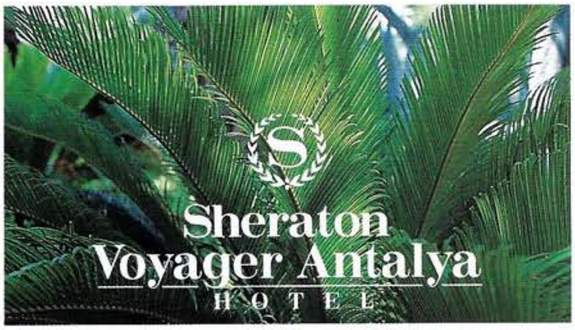
Nothing in late Ottoman culture would lead us to expect that Turkey's greatest poet by far in the twentieth century would be a figure like Nazım Hikmet, who owed nothing to his country's oriental past, who wrote a torrent of passionate free verse, and whose imagination was driven by the revolutionary fervour of international communism.

Yet Nazım, born in Thessalonica in 1902, came from a family background of fairly standard Ottoman upper officialdom, and at the beginning, at least, he shared its sentiments. The poems of his high school years are patriotic jingles which echo a thousand Victorian versifiers.

The change came when he was in his early twenties and decided to join the Russian revolution. When he and his friend Va-Nu arrived in the Soviet Union for the first time, at Batum in 1921, there were several minutes of unpleasantness with the border guards after Nazım disclosed that he came from a non-proletarian family of pashas, while Va-Nu gave his late father's occupation as "governor of Beirut".

This particular story, alas,





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does not make it into Saime Göksu's and Edward Timms' excellent biography. But there are virtually no omissions with which one can quarrel. Göksu and Timms have produced a book which is a model of what a critical life of a great poet should be.

A good book in English on Nazım Hikmet Ran (Ran is his little-used surname) is long overdue. He has been very well served in Turkish by the biographies and memoirs of friends and contemporaries. Va-Nu's *Bu Dünyadan Nazım Geçti,* in particular, gives such a vivid picture of Nazım that it lingers forever in the mind, like memories of an old friend – one whose voice, of course, remains alive in his poems.

If you don't know Turkish, it is perhaps hard to understand why Nazım Hikmet's poetry is so powerfully exciting, or why attempts to describe it lure critics into merely offering us baffling oxymorons like "magic realism". And of course there is his personal charisma, not to mention the pathos of a life lived with constantly proclaimed energy, hope and enthusiasm though largely passed in prison and exile. When I first picked up this book and looked through it, one sentence jumped out of the pages: "The years 1929–33 mark the longest period of freedom the poet ever experienced in Turkey."

Göksu and Timms present the historical background in detail, but with great deftness and admirable balance. There is critical discussion of the texts. Shimmering translations of key poems are worked directly into the story. When the authors feel that their translation does not do justice to the original, because of differences between English and Turkish, they explain why. To crown it all, there are photographs, cartoons, and drawings. The publishers, Hurst, have been almost prodigal with the reader and it seems a little ungenerous to object that references are embedded in brackets in the text, rather than relegated to notes at the bottom of the page, and that occasionally the proofreading has faltered.

Nazım's foibles and weaknesses are dispassionately signalled when necessary, an important requirement for a biography of a poet who was committed in everything he did to an unscrupulous political movement that routinely bent the truth to the needs of the moment.

The notorious fickleness of geniuses – Nazım's tendency to love the woman in his life with passionate and haunting words, then to pass on after a time to someone else – is an obvious challenge for biographers: "...where Mayakovsky was driven to distraction by passionate love affairs, Nazım was sustained by relationships which enhanced his creativity," they write. "Life is not worth living unless one is in love with one person and also with millions of people," Nazım himself wrote.

"This was certainly a creative outlook for the poet, but for ordinary human beings it caused complications," his biographers observe drily before going on to tell how, in 1948, Nazım dropped his beloved and long-suffering wife Piraye, to whom he had written wonderfully moving letters from prison, for a new lover who inspired him with the passion for new poems. With cool economy, Göksu and Timms expose the undertones of guilt and self-pity this produced in his work, suggesting that he temporarily lost control of his art as well as his emotions.

On January 17, 1938, Nazım was arrested for having seditious contacts with students in the Military Academy. He received a fifteen-year prison sentence, increased later to twenty-eight years. He was only released in July 1950, after an international campaign backed by, among others, Camus, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Picasso and Paul Robeson, and a hunger strike in Turkey in which three of the country's most famous poets – Orhan Veli, Melih Cevdet Anday and Oktay Rifat – took part. The main body of his work was written during those prison years, along with translations for the minister of education, Hasan Ali Yücel, of the libretto of *Tosca* and the whole of *War and Peace*.

The epic qualities of Tolstoy's novel spurred Nazım to attempt something similar himself. From 1941 onwards, he was at work in his cell on *Human Landscapes of My Country*, a vast narrative poem of 22,000 lines, distantly modelled on the medieval English poem *Piers Ploughman*. At this point Göksu and Timms break through the usual limitations of a biography and provide an excellent critical introduction to the poem.

Release from prison did not bring an end to Nazım's problems. The friends' house he stayed in was attacked. Though he was nearly fifty and had been a military cadet in his youth, there were moves to conscript him. In June 1951 he fled to Romania and lived out the remaining dozen years of his life stripped of his Turkish citizenship but as a Communist international literary grandee, lionised on public occasions but pining for everyone he had left behind.

Inside Turkey, he was banned, though his works circulated even among right-of-centre politicians in a kind of *samizdat* form. He died near Moscow in June 1963 and was buried next to Chekhov, Turgenev and Mayokovsky.

In this post-communist era, his reputation must inevitably undergo a delicate reassessment. Does his poetry still speak to us, or is it out of date, as with Mayakovsky, Nazım's nearest Russian counterpart? "Nazım has ceased to be a cult figure of the communist world and become a poet of universal significance," the authors say. This lucid, intelligent and formidably well-researched book is compelling evidence that this is indeed the case.

DAVID BARCHARD

# Fundamental division

Islam and Society in Turkey
By David Shankland
Eothen Press, £18.95

A British ambassador in Ankara in the 1940s sagely recalled in his memoirs discussing religion in general and Islam in particular with deputies in the Grand National Assembly. A number of deputies, he reports, privately thought that voluntary religious instruction would be a good thing, that it would "check the spread of moral corruption among the youth". "The delimitation of the 'legitimate sphere' of religion had been achieved and there was no longer any danger of the old theocracy being restored," he wrote.

He would surely be surprised if he could read David Shankland's fascinating and vivid account of the role of Islam in Turkey fifty years on. By the mid-1990s Turkey was on the way to having two rival school systems: a secular one and an Islamic one. The Presidency of Religious Affairs employed more civil servants than some large ministries. Religion and politics were mingled. Signs in many shop doorways read "Sovereignty belongs to Allah alone", and the then largest political party argued for the introduction of a thoroughgoing Sunni Islamic order, referred to as "the National View". By 1996

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National View". By 1996 its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, was prime minister.

In Istanbul and Ankara the Islamists took power in local elections, though not without claims from their opponents of electoral malpractice. In the central Anatolian towns where they won, according to local residents, life changed dramatically as bars, restaurants and places of entertainment were squeezed from the scene. In lower-income districts of Ankara, I watched stickers in Arabic as well as Turkish letters going up on walls, warning of an impending great battle between religion and its enemies.

Turkish foreign policy also shifted. It began to look less at the West and more towards Iran, Malaysia, and even Libya, though for some reason Saudi Arabian responses were curiously muted. Views on this state of affairs differ. One diplomatic wife in Ankara could be heard saying, "Parents want their children to be religious in Iowa, so why not in Turkey?"

Then in 1997 the Islamists fell from power. Within a year, their party was dissolved by court order and their leaders faced a set of legal actions. In the 1999 general elections, their share of the poll dropped by six per cent.

Western observers are almost as badly divided over what to make of all this as the Turks themselves, who, for a time, were fiercely polarised between secularists and Islamists. I remember Turkish friends who, having originally maintained that there was absolutely no challenge from political Islam in Turkey, came by 1997 to suspect even me of fundamentalism because I avoided alcohol at parties and used the word *İnşallah* frequently in conversation.

Questions about where Islam and politics are going in Turkey ultimately can be answered only by looking closely at the facts. David Shankland and the Eothen Press have thus performed a timely service by providing a very readable account of Turkish Islam in the 1990s. The Islamic scene in Turkey is highly diverse, ranging from sophisticated theologians and scholars, some of whom are world-class intellectuals, to the brutal terrorism of the Hizbullah, which tortured and murdered moderate Islamists, burying their bodies in gardens. There is the "Erbakan phenomenon" (Erbakan led Turkey's Islamist movement for four decades), to which Shankland devotes two chapters of his book; and of course there are the Alevis, Turkish Shi'ites, a sizable group who are excluded from any state support but themselves generally support the secular state while often leaning to the radical left in politics.

This is the first authoritative study of its subject for the general reader. The author looks more closely at village Islam than at the big cities of Turkey and the teeming complexity of the metropolitan Islamic scene, where charismatic-style and occult groups have emerged. Nor perhaps does he really explain just how it is that Turkey has become secularised in a way that has never happened to any other Islamic society, so that the ordinary individual does not have to defer absolutely in his or her daily life to the commands of religion as mediated by the clergy. But he understands well that Islamic politics in 1990s Turkey were essentially about reversing this change.

Turkish readers will already know most of what Shankland writes, though they will find the crispness of his account refreshing. Non-Turks should read this book as an indispensable road map to what is going on in Turkish society today.

DAVID BARCHARD

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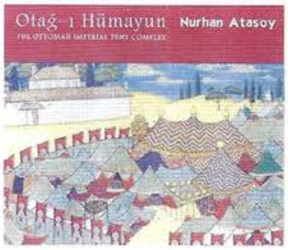

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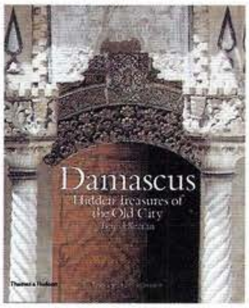

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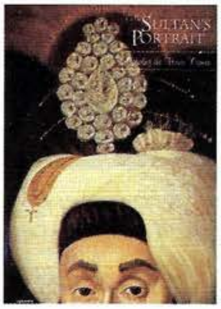

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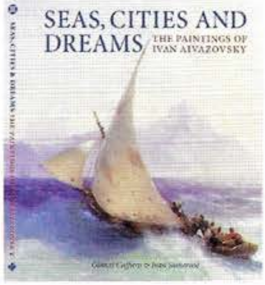

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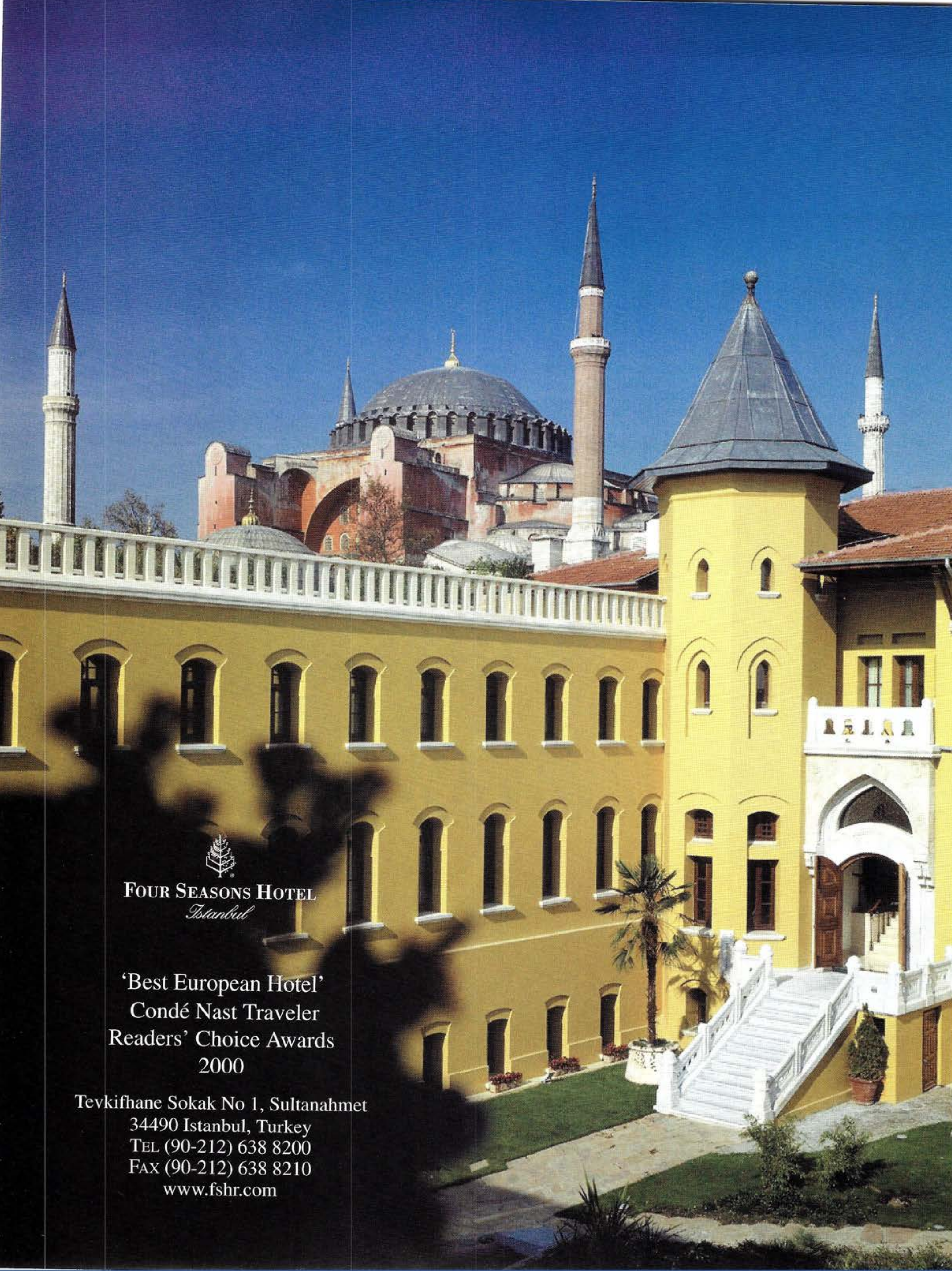

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# The bard of Byzantium

Sir Steven Runciman was a supreme storyteller, whether at the dinner table or in the majestic sweep of his historical writing. Fellow-Byzantinist Anthony Bryer recalls an elegant figure for whom history was about the destinies of man

Sotheby's London

Runciman in the 1920s photographed by Cecil Beaton

Steven Runciman first saw the skyline of Istanbul, marching out of the mist from the gasworks at Yedikule to the minarets of Ayasofya, from the deck of his grandfather's three-masted schooner, the *Sunbeam* (itself a historic yacht) in April 1924. For a twenty-year-old Cambridge undergraduate, it was the only way to arrive. He never forgot the scene. True, he missed meeting the last caliph (for they had inconsiderately deposed the sultan's heir a few weeks before), but he complained rarely, and camels still swayed over the Galata Bridge, there were rather fashionable veils on the Grand' Rue de Pera, and families such as the Whittalls flourished all over the place. Outside the then still unencumbered Theodosian Walls, a gypsy told him that he would have illnesses but would "survive to a ripe old age". The fortune-teller was right.

A visit in March 1928 was a come-down. Cloth caps had replaced the fez, as once the fez had replaced the turban: Runciman was all for Union, but was sometimes less sure of expressions of Progress. Istanbul was cold and drab, uncertain of its fortune in the new Turkey. But Runciman was already (as he told Eleftherios Venizelos, who happened to be on the boat) a proclaimed Byzantinist.

In the summer of 1937 he "did" Turkey properly. He was now an established Byzantinist, with books behind him that are still classics – *Romanus Lecapenus* (1929), on the tenth-century emperor, and *The First Bulgarian Empire* (1930). His instincts for place and people were acute. In Istanbul he clambered up ladders in St Sophia with Thomas Whittemore and down trenches in the Great Palace with Professor JH Baxter – both rather dodgy pursuits. He started following the progress of the First Crusade across Anatolia on the ground, later exploring the tactics of 1097 at Dorylaion (Eskişehir). On the Zigana Pass, above Trabzon, he was overtaken by a military detachment sweltering up the mountain, which gave him an indelible idea of the smell, as well as the sight, of an army on the march: "The aroma that they left behind somewhat ruined our picnic."

Back in Istanbul, Runciman met President Atatürk in the Dolmabahçe Palace, where the clocks were to stop when he died on November 10, 1938. "He was stocky and upright, but obviously sick, with a complexion that was pale olive-green. His eyes, however, were unforgettable. They were steely blue in colour, and they seemed to pierce right through you. He was very gracious. My father [Viscount Runciman] had recently arranged a trade treaty with Turkey, and Atatürk spoke of it with appreciation. When I told him that I was a Byzantinist he expressed his approval…"

A consequence was that, in March 1942, President Ismet Inönü summoned Dr Runciman to be professor of Byzantine Art and History at Istanbul University. Steven then happened to be a member of the Government Information Service of Palestine, living in the House by Herod's Gate in Jerusalem, where I first found him. He recalled that, when I was summoned to display my fluent Arabic, learned by artless rote from the kitchen boy, the appalled Miss Freya Stark adjusted her hair-piece as she explained what this child was telling her to do until the thirteenth generation. I confess I have no recollection of this event – though I like Runciman's.

Steven's recollection was impeccable. His repertoire of stories became canonical. True, the matter of Byzantine, Ottoman and any court history is good gossip – who met whom and what the consequence was. But do not be deceived. His tales were an illustration of, rather than a diversion from, what he really did. Professor Runciman was a historian who bestrode the Bosphorus before there were bridges between the Byzantine and Ottoman empires.

He served over three years in Istanbul, from 1942 to 1945, when the university examinations were still oral.

## The Visionary versus the Nit-pickers

Runciman eloquently set out his views on the duty of the historian in the preface to his classic work, A History of the Crusades (1951):

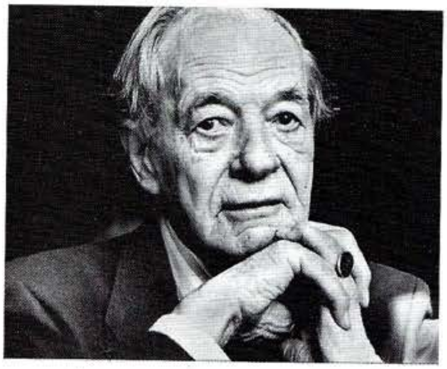
'It may seem unwise for one British pen to compete with the massed typewriters of the United States. But in fact there is no competition. A single author cannot speak with the high authority of a panel of experts, but he may succeed in giving to his work an integrated and even an epical quality that no composite volume can achieve. Homer as well as Herodotus was a Father of History, as Gibbon, the greatest of our historians, was aware; and it is difficult, in spite of certain critics, to believe that Homer was a panel. History-writing to-day has passed into an Alexandrian age, where criticism has overpowered creation. Faced by the mountainous heap of the minutiae of knowledge and awed by the watchful severity of his colleagues, the modern historian too often takes refuge in learned articles or narrowly specialized dissertations, small fortresses that are easy to defend from attack. His work can be of the highest value; but it is not an end in itself. I believe that the supreme duty of the historian is to write history, that is to say, to attempt to record in one sweeping sequence the greater events and movements that have swayed the destinies of man. The writer rash enough to make the attempt should not be criticized for his ambition, however much he may deserve censure for the inadequacy of his equipment or the inanity of his results.'

Here he lived mostly in old Bebek and lectured and examined with an interpreter. (In fact his Turkish was to be quite good enough to converse with Rudolf Nureyev, the dancer from the steppes of Central Asia, and his Arabic was good enough for him to be offered – along with Abba Eban – the assistant directorship of the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies in Lebanon.) Yet at Cambridge his only supervisor had been JB Bury, who, on a walk round the Backs, was satisfied that Runciman's Bulgarian came up to scratch (Classics were assumed).

Istanbul was the only university in which Runciman held a chair. He necessarily had to write his lectures, which he took more seriously than he admitted – as anyone knows who invited him over the next half century to speak to an audience, however modest, from Lockerbie to Los Angeles. Are there survivors among his pupils in Istanbul? He was proud to have as a student a Gagauz, an original Turkish Christian from Dobrudja in Romania. But in Istanbul during the Second World War, it was assumed that Runciman was a spy – well, everyone else was.

True, the Italian embassy reported him as *"molto intelligente e molto pericoloso"*, and in Ankara Runciman's shirt was laid out by "Cicero", the British ambassador's personal valet, who doubled as a German spy. Indeed as late as the 9th International Congress of Byzantine Studies at Salonica in 1953, Runciman found an agent in the queue after his lecture, asking for instructions. Yet, I must say that if Runciman had been a spy, he would have made a better story of it. Rather, he observed *moeurs*, in the spirit of Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*.

His assistant at the university was the wife of the *Mevlevi* Çelebi Efendi, through whom he became an honorary dervish (a story too long for us here). Other friends were Osman Okyar (the economist), Princess Marthe Bibesco (who did *not* dance with Proust), the papal legate Monsignor Roncalli (Pope John XXIII from 1958 to 1963) and, soon after, Patriarch Athenagoras (1948–72).



This was a truly catholic circle, with exotic titles all round. But of all his own honours, I believe that Sir Steven treasured most the honorary office to which the great Patriarch Athenagoras elevated him in 1969: that of Grand Orator of the Great Church of Constantinople. This was serious, and arose from Runciman's *The Great Church in Captivity* (1968), a moving and then unfashionable study of the Orthodox Church as an integral component of the Ottoman Empire.

Runciman never lost his affection for Istanbul, where, with Turkish friends, he last returned to his favourite mosque, Sinan's Sokullu Mehmed Pasha, in 1986. But he chose to write his most impressive and best-loved work, *A History of the Crusades* in three volumes, on the island of Eigg, which is one of the Small Isles of the Inner Hebrides of Scotland. His father had bought the then depressed island in 1926, and in retrospect the crofters of Eigg, who do not touch caps, now regard the benevolent reign of the Runciman dynasty until 1966 as a golden age.

It was not a convenient place to write the last history of the Crusades to be attempted on such a scale by a single hand. Yet accounts of this shy but gregarious scholar's working methods may be compared with those of Gibbon. At the pier of Eigg, sheep were exchanged for consignments of books from the London Library for the postman to deliver. An islander reports that "He arrived with a suitcase full of books and another full of groceries, and did his own cooking and shopping, walking to the shop with his basket under his arm. He even picked up a few words of Gaelic which he tried on the postman, and never forgot to throw a party for the island children every Easter… His favourite form of relaxation from writing was to play his Bechstein grand piano, and in the summer he would invite his friends to share the beauty of the island. They included diplomats, members of the Royal Family and musicians such as the famous Yehudi Menuhin, whom he took to the islanders' dances – 'a handy man for the ceilidh'."

In 1966, Steven Runciman moved from Eigg to a tower on the Scottish Borders near Lockerbie, where he preserved the *nargile* presented to him by Çelebi Efendi (though he actually preferred Winterman's Café Crème cigarillos), along with tales of Old Turkey – though, always alert to something fresh, he relished *Ararat*, his great-nephew's poem on Ağrı Dağı published in the last issue of Cornucopia.

As the gypsy predicted, he died at a ripe old age. He was buried with the simple rites of the Church of Scotland. For someone who gave so much pleasure to others, that is felicity.

*The Hon Sir Steven (James Cochran Stevenson) Runciman, born July 7, 1903, died November 1, 2000; Professor of Byzantine Art and History, Istanbul University, 1942–45; President of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1962–95; President of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, 1983–2000.*

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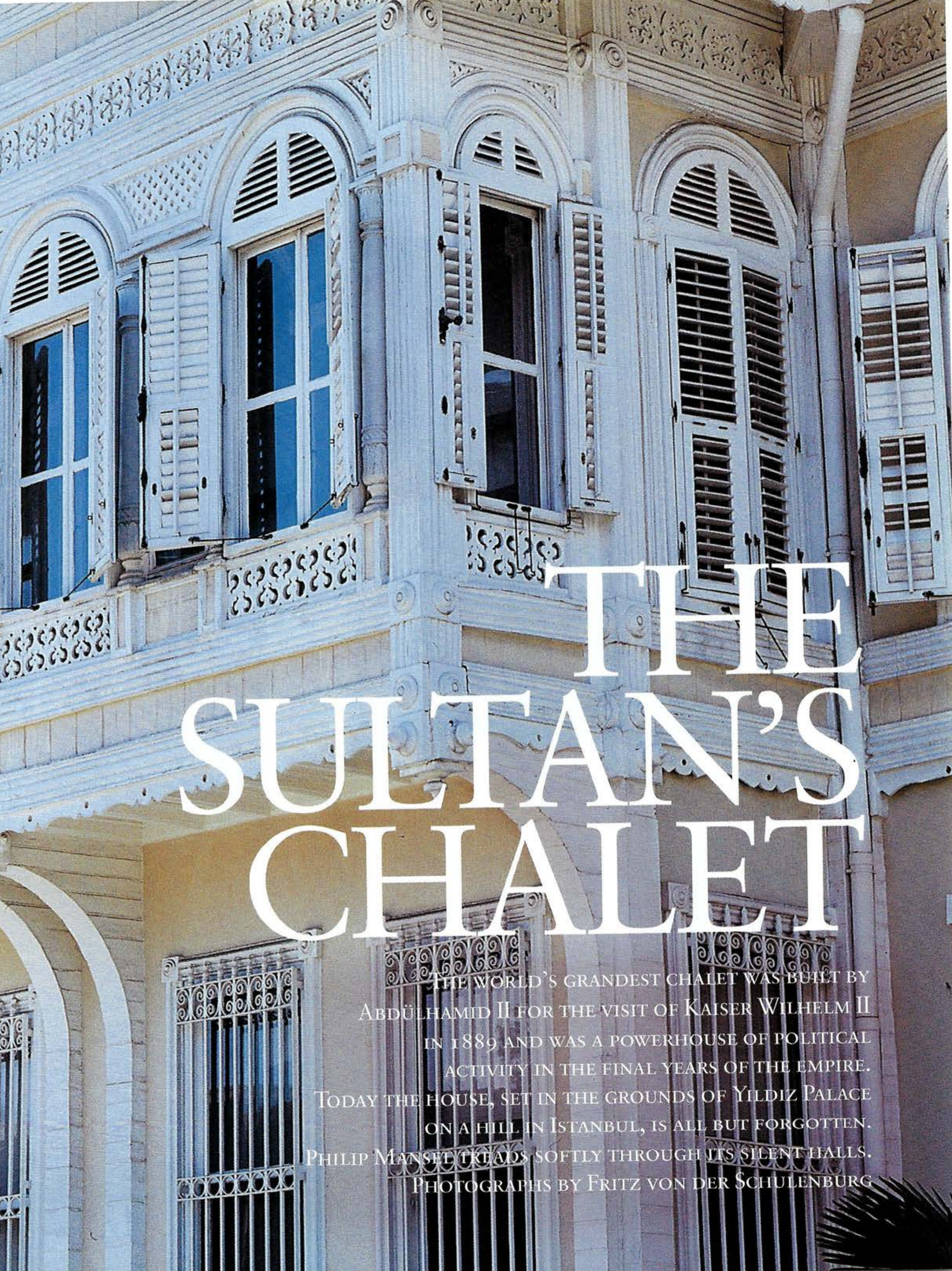
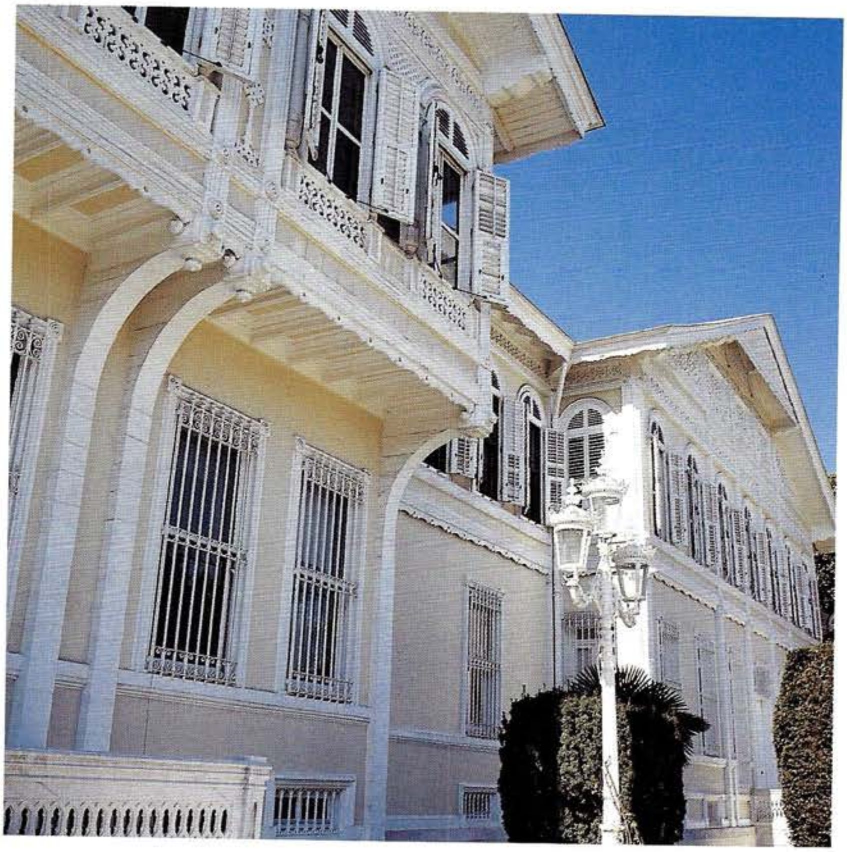


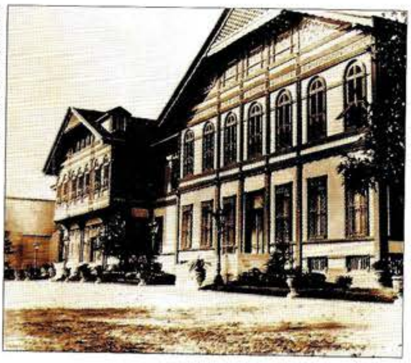
# THE SULTAN'S CHALET

The world's grandest chalet was built by Abdülhamid II for the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1889 and was a powerhouse of political activity in the final years of the empire. Today the house, set in the grounds of Yildiz Palace on a hill in Istanbul, is all but forgotten. Philip Mansel treads softly through its silent halls.

Photographs by Fritz von der Schulenburg

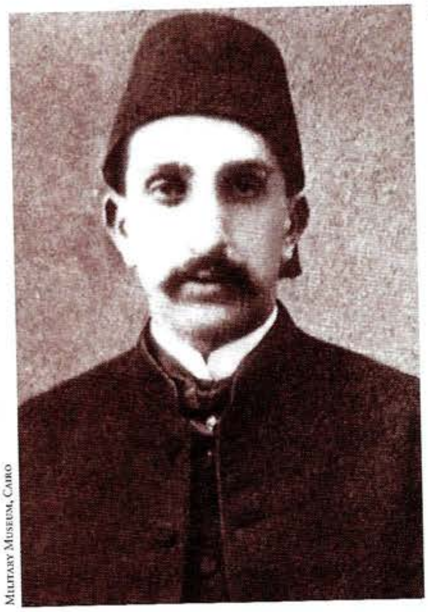
# THE SULTAN'S CHALET





Yildiz Collection, IRCICA

Built in stages, the chalet becomes grander from left to right. Above, the façade today, and left, photographed in the 1890s by Abdullah Frères. The original, modest house (on the far left) dates from 1879. The central part was built to receive Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1889. Right: the pierced marble balustrade is part of the last and grandest section, designed by D'Aronco for the Kaiser's second visit, in 1898



MILITARY MUSEUM, CAIRO

A YOUNG SULTAN ABDÜLHAMID II. LEFT, THE GILDED ROOM, LEADING TO, OVERLEAF, THE CEREMONIAL SALOON, WITH ITS VAST HEREKE RUG AND BOHEMIAN CRYSTAL TORCHÈRES

The Yıldız Palace is a time capsule of Ottoman Art Nouveau, an expression in wood and stone of the style and reign of the enigmatic Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). Yıldız – from the Turkish word for star, as it was easy to see the stars there – is set on a hill above the Dolmabahçe Palace, overlooking the Bosphorus.

Since the early seventeenth century, there had been an imperial kiosk there, to which more substantial buildings were added in the 1860s by Sultan Abdülaziz. In March 1877, during the Russo–Turkish war, his nephew Abdülhamid moved to Yıldız from the Dolmabahçe Palace. He had an acute sense of his own vulnerability, and Yıldız was less exposed to attack from land or sea. By the end of his reign Yıldız had become the last great power statement of the Ottoman dynasty, at once a palace, a ministry, a military headquarters and a university campus.

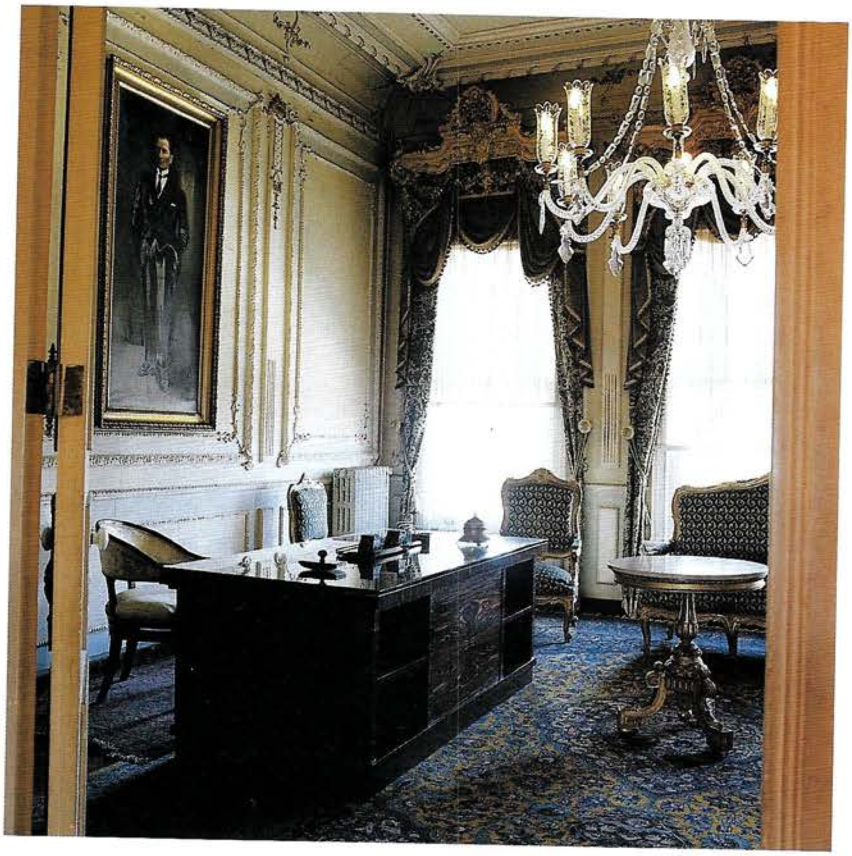
Behind the high palace walls were barracks, factories, schools (one of which, the school for railway engineers, developed into the present Yıldız University); a library, an observatory, a theatre, and a zoo; an exhibition hall for the products of the Sultan's factories; museums of weapons, entomology and ornithology; and pavilions in Japanese, Persian and French styles.

In the city of Istanbul, public buildings such as the Central Post office in Eminönü and the Land Registry offices in Sultanahmet, which can still be admired today, were being built in neo-Turkish styles. Yıldız, however, shows that the personal preferences of the Sultan were more European. This palace city has many buildings in versions of Art Nouveau, of which the Chalet Kiosk (Şale Köşkü in Turkish) is the most remarkable.

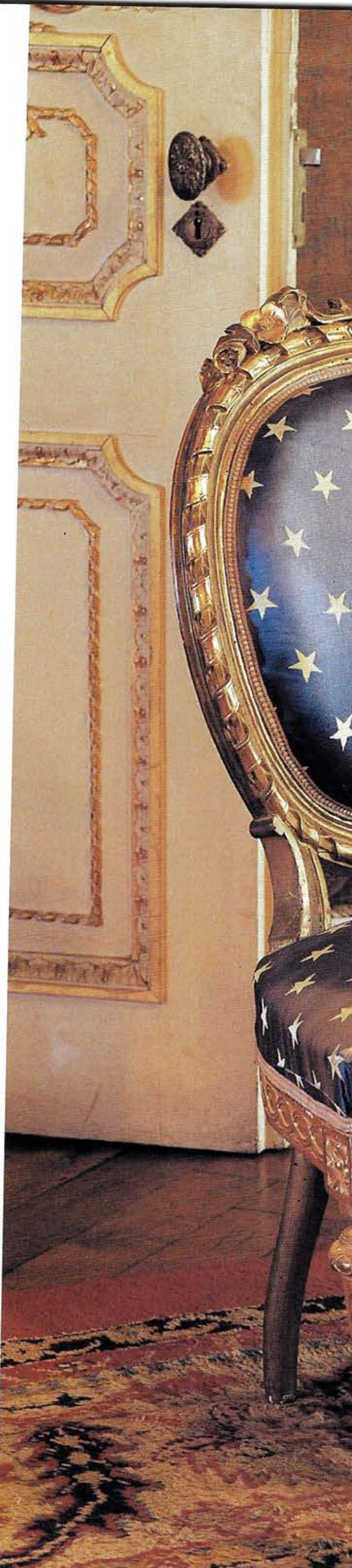
The capital of a great empire, one of the most celebrated cities in the world, Istanbul received many prominent foreign visitors. To lodge them in the style to which they were accustomed, Abdülhamid had the left-hand section of the present Chalet Kiosk constructed in 1879–80. It was an imperial guesthouse; the Sultan himself, his children and harem lived in other buildings nearby. The Chalet Kiosk is so called because it began as an imported prefabricated building in the Swiss chalet style, with wooden walls and eaves, wide shutters and pointed roofs. The idea probably came from the chalet that the Sultan's vassal and rival, the Khedive Ismail of Egypt, had erected in his park at Emirgan further up the Bosphorus.

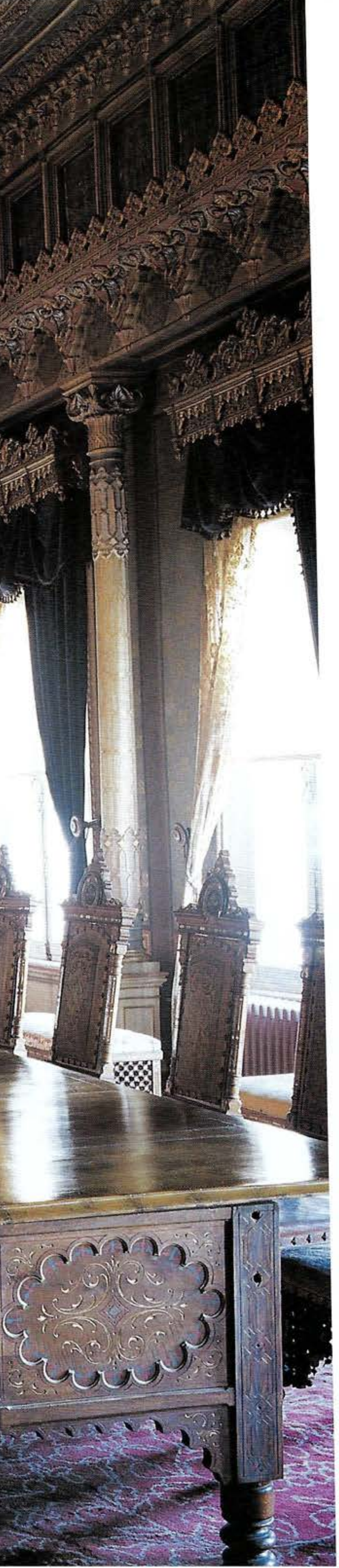
The Chalet Kiosk was subsequently extended, in ever grander fashion, to become what is no doubt the largest chalet in the world. In 1887–9 His Majesty's chief architect, Serkis Karapeti Balyan, a member of the celebrated family of Paris-trained Ottoman Armenian

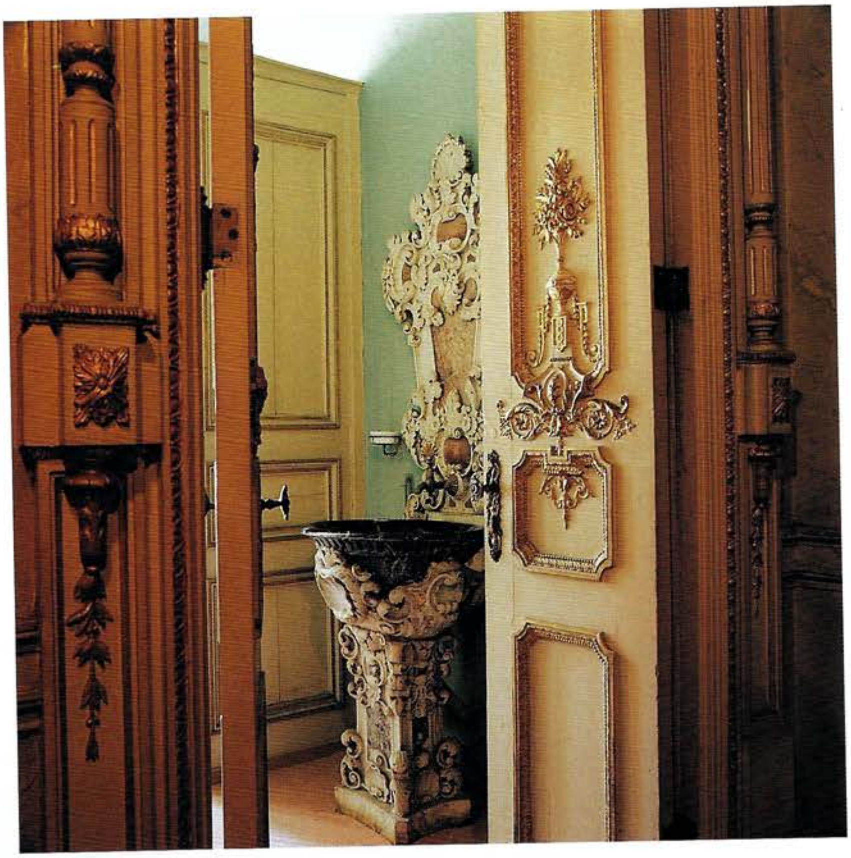
*continued on page 63*



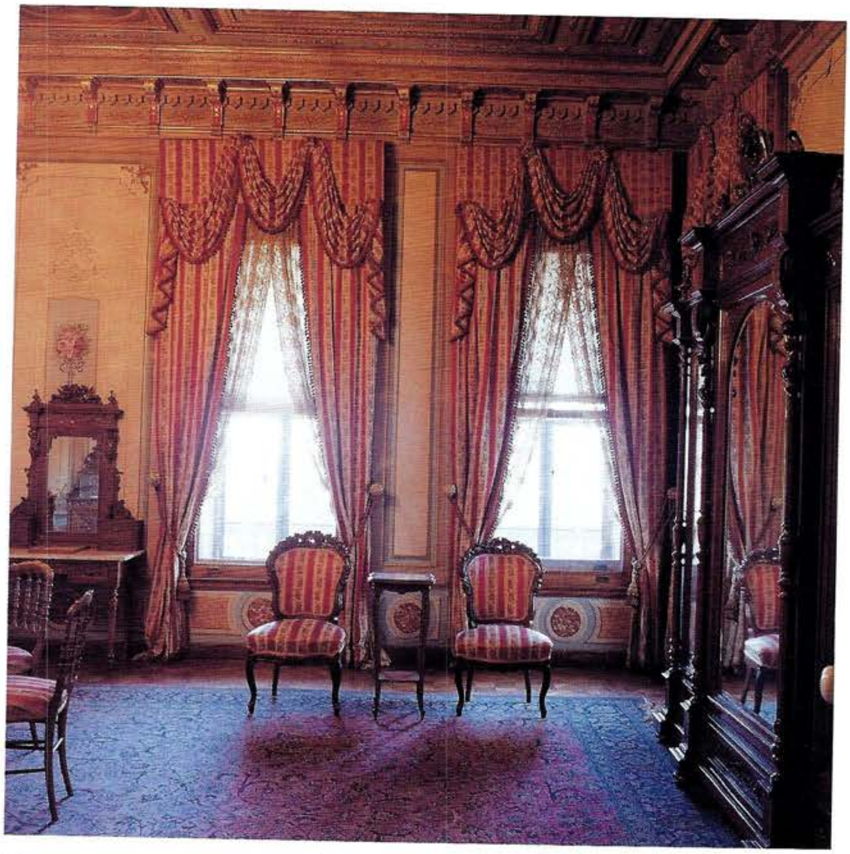
Above: the study used by Atatürk in the early days of the Republic has a practical Twenties desk. Right: chairs upholstered in silk made by the weavers of Hereke, more famous for their silk carpets. Hereke still has a workshop that makes fabrics for the upkeep of Istanbul's palaces. Overleaf: the regal passion for giltwood is seen in the Yellow Room. The Pompadour mirrors would have displayed fine porcelain. The yellow-ground carpet was woven in Hereke



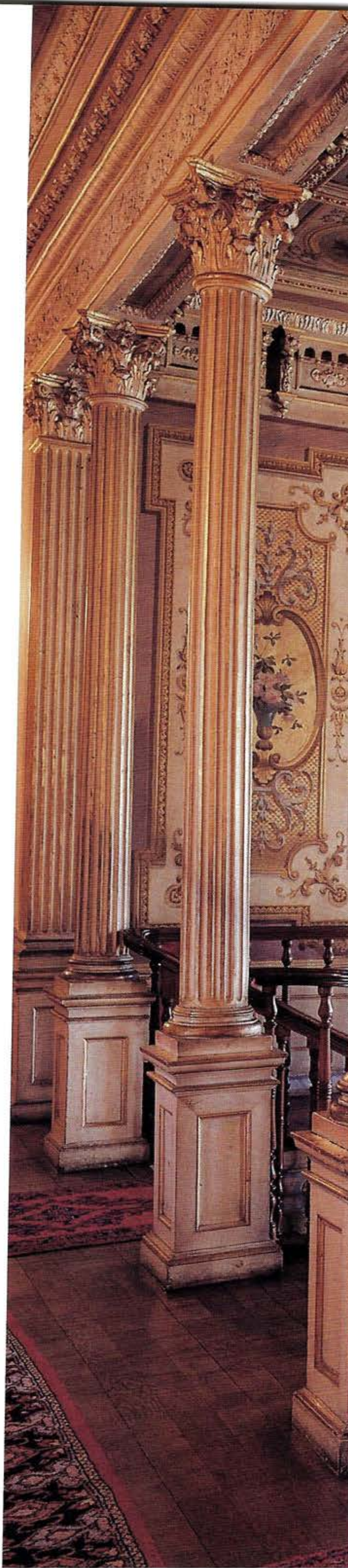


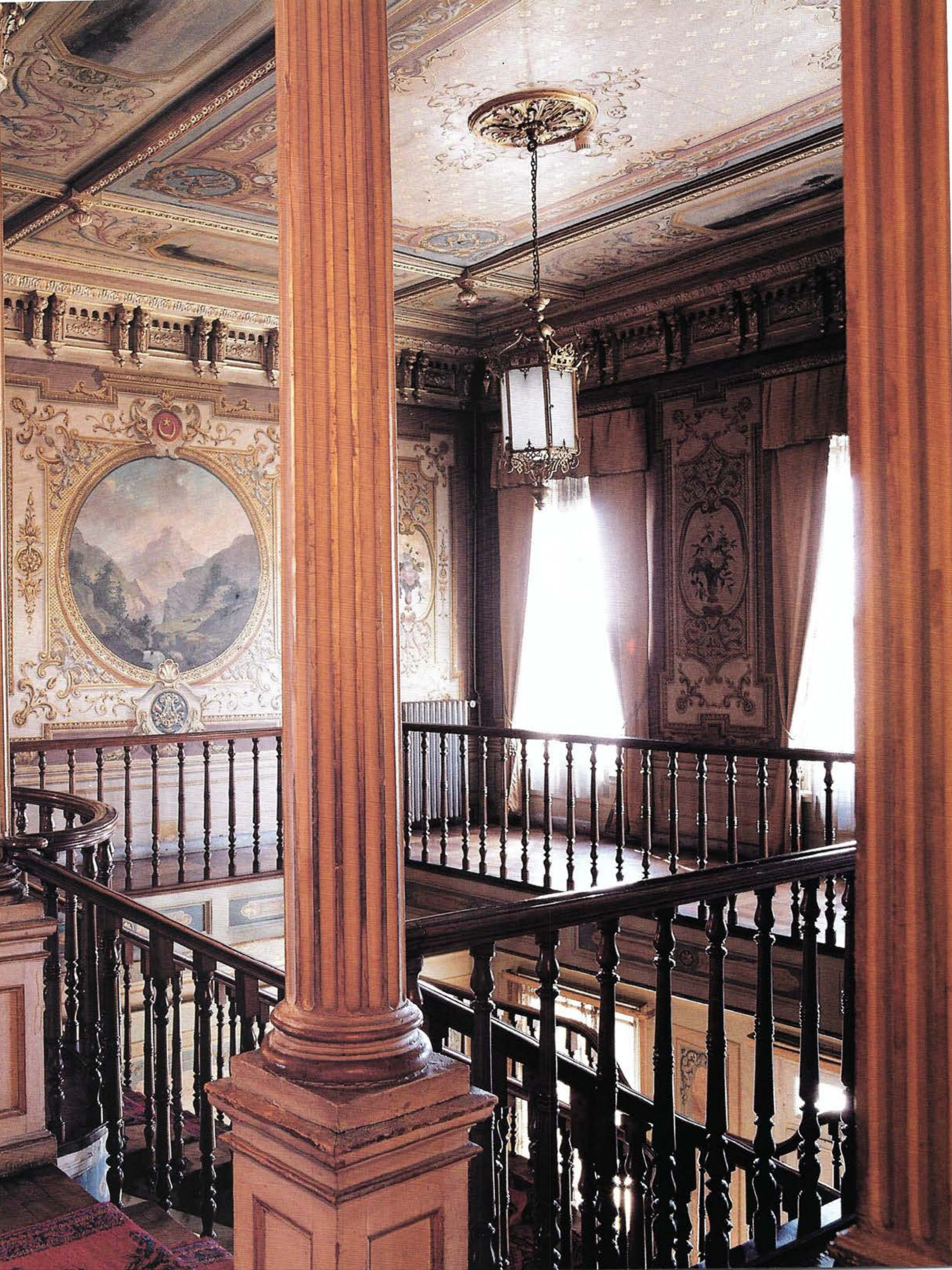


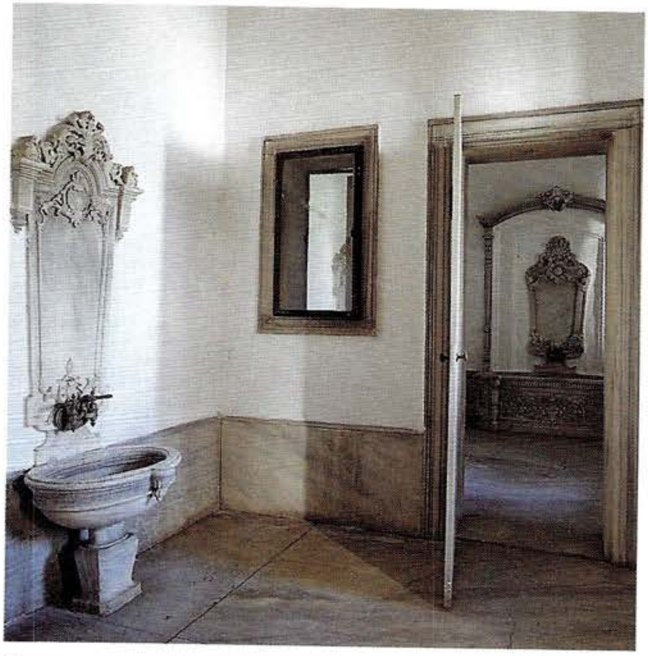
Left: the Orientalist Gothic dining room. In the haste to complete the building for the Kaiser's visit in 1889, the doors, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, had to be borrowed from the nearby Çırağan Palace. The enamel-inlaid chandelier may be from Barbedienne, the great Paris foundry. The room is seen in use on page 66. Above: a late 17th-century Venetian marble basin in a bathroom. Overleaf: delicate carving and pastel colours in a suite overlooking the sea lighten the mood



THE CENTRAL PART OF THE CHALET, DESIGNED BY SERKIS KARAPETI BALYAN. RIGHT: AT THE HEAD OF THE DOUBLE STAIRCASE, WHICH LEADS ON TO THE DINING ROOM USED FOR STATE BANQUETS. ABOVE: A DRESSING ROOM WITH LOUIS XV CHAIRS AND A ROBUST MIRRORED WARDROBE. OVERLEAF: DETAIL OF A FINE CORNICE DEPICTING THE BOSPHORUS PICNIC SPOT KNOWN AS 'THE SWEET WATERS OF ASIA'. ABDÜLHAMID DID NOT INTEND THE HOUSE TO BE GRANDIOSE, BUT IT HAD TO BE FIT TO RECEIVE THE KAISER







THE AUSTERE HAMAM, IN THE EARLIEST PART OF THE BUILDING. THE INTERNAL WINDOWS ALLOWED LANTERNS TO CAST LIGHT INTO BOTH ROOMS, THE TEPIDARIUM AND THE ADJOINING CALDARIUM. ABOVE: A CLASSICALLY OTTOMAN MARBLE BASIN. BATHS AND BASINS TRADITIONALLY HAD ORNATE MIRROR STONES, OR AYNAS, ABOVE THEM. OPPOSITE: THE BATH AND AYNA VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND ARE BOTH CARVED IN 18TH-CENTURY EUROPEAN STYLE. OVERLEAF: A DAINTILY PAINTED CERAMIC WASHBASIN, THOUGHT TO BE AN EARLY PRODUCT OF THE PORCELAIN FACTORY THAT WAS PART OF THE YILDIZ PALACE COMPLEX

# THE SULTAN'S CHALET

*continued from page 45*

architects, added a new section to the Chalet. One room was a dining room in Arabesque style, fitted with doors inlaid with mother-of-pearl taken from the Çırağan Palace on the Bosphorus, also by Balyan.

Part of the Chalet Kiosk's enigmatic charm comes from the fact that, like many nineteenth-century buildings in Istanbul, it is free of the stylistic conventions ruling in Europe. Throughout the kiosk the light and eclectic decoration is in a mixture of Viennese "second rococo", with gilded *boiseries*, Arabesque details and Italianate frescoes.

The architect of the next section, added in haste in 1898, was an Italian exponent of Art Nouveau, Raimondo d'Aronco. He had come to Istanbul in 1893, recommended by the Italian ambassador, and served on the commission for the rebuilding of the city after the earthquake of 1894. After this extension there was a total of sixty rooms in the Chalet Kiosk, including four large reception rooms, nine European-style bathrooms and two Turkish bath suites. It was a showcase for the empire. Some of the vases came from the imperial porcelain factory established in the park at Yıldız in 1893. Some pieces of furniture in the palace were made by the Sultan himself, for whom carpentry was a relaxation.

At the end of d'Aronco's section is one of the most sumptuous rooms in Istanbul: the Ceremonial Saloon. Its gilded walls are hung with flowered silk panels from the imperial factory at Hereke. The floor is covered by a massive three-medallion grey and red carpet; covering more than four hundred square metres, it is said to weigh seven tons and to have been brought from Hereke on carts drawn by nineteen pairs of oxen. Lighting came from three crystal chandeliers and Bohemian torchères of red crystal. Although it was forbidden in the rest of the city, Yıldız used electricity.

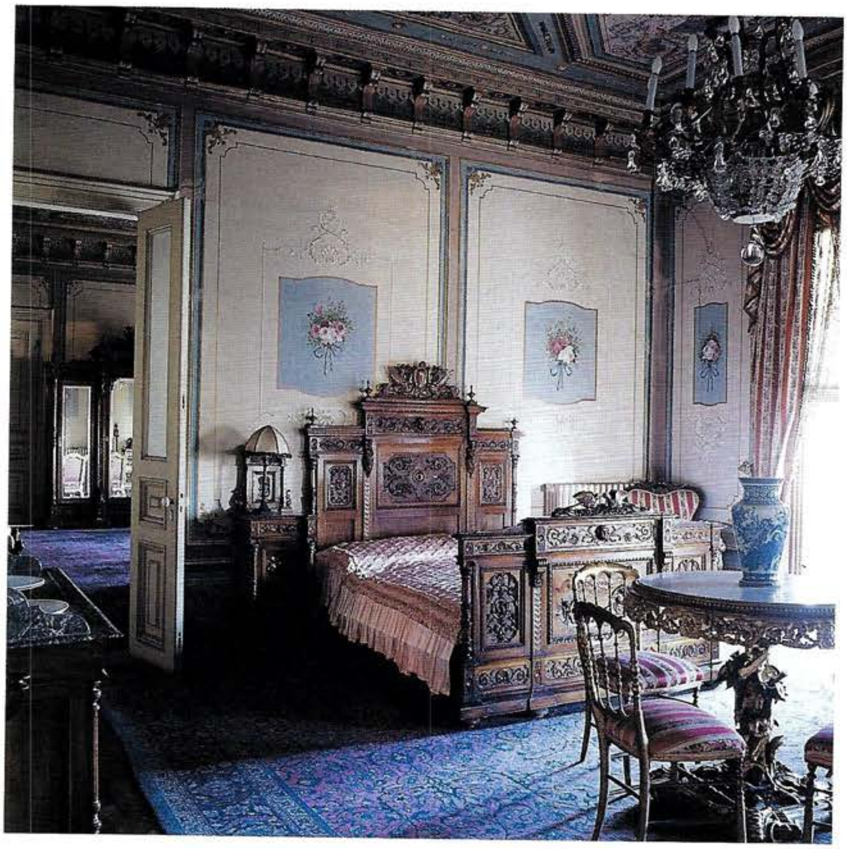
Of the visiting heads of state who stayed in Yıldız – including the King and Queen of Sweden, the King of Serbia and the Khedive of Egypt – none was as important as the Sultan's ally, the German Emperor Wilhelm II. It was for his visits in 1889 and 1898 that the Chalet Kiosk was hastily extended and refurnished.

The construction and decoration of the Chalet Kiosk is therefore a symbol of the friendship between the Ottoman and German empires, as well as of the Ottoman court's participation in the European system of exchanges of hospitality between monarchs and ambassadors. The Sultan himself gave the German Empress Augusta Victoria his arm when he escorted her from the Chalet Kiosk to visit his sisters and wives in the harem. The Chalet asserted the grandeur and modernity of the Ottoman Empire, and its equality with the powers which were so eager to devour it.

By 1908, according to one estimate, 12,000 people inhabited the separate palace city of Yıldız. Outside the palace walls, however, the empire was crumbling. Telegrams arrived daily with news of revolts in the provinces. On July 24, 1908 the Young Turk revolution established a constitutional monarchy in place of the Sultan's Islamic autocracy. Once the Sultan had entertained monarchs and ambassadors to dinner in the Ceremonial Saloon. On December 31, 1908, in the same room, he gave a special banquet, every detail of which he checked himself, in honour of the deputies to the second Ottoman parliament. Afterwards, he wept and said that he had never been happier. "In all my life I do not think I have seen Papa so joyful, satisfied and radiant," wrote his daughter Ayşe Sultan. "He said in his serious voice: 'I have eaten with the deputies of my Nation. They were very sincere with me. I thank God I have seen that and to have succeeded.'"

However, on April 27, 1909, the Sultan was deposed by Young Turks and taken as a prisoner to Salonica. Of the thousands of objects contained at Yıldız, some were pillaged by revolutionaries. Most went to other palaces or government institutions (the library, for example, is in Istanbul University). The Chalet Kiosk today lacks many of its original pictures and objets

BELOW, A BEDROOM IN THE OLDEST PART, USED MORE RECENTLY FOR THE WIVES OF VISITING HEADS OF STATE. RIGHT: THE ROCOCO CERAMIC STOVE IN THE STUDY OVERLOOKING THE SEA IS SWEDISH



d'art and much of its silverware.

The friendship between the Ottoman and German empires, of which the Chalet was symbol and witness, led to the Ottoman declaration of war on Britain, France and Russia in 1914.

When the Kaiser stayed for the last time in the Chalet, in October 1917, British forces were already occupying parts of the Ottoman Empire. In 1918, Istanbul itself was occupied. At 8 am on November 17, 1922, the last Sultan, Abdülhamid's younger brother Mehmed VI, was escorted to the safety of a British battleship from a door in the palace wall just above the Chalet.

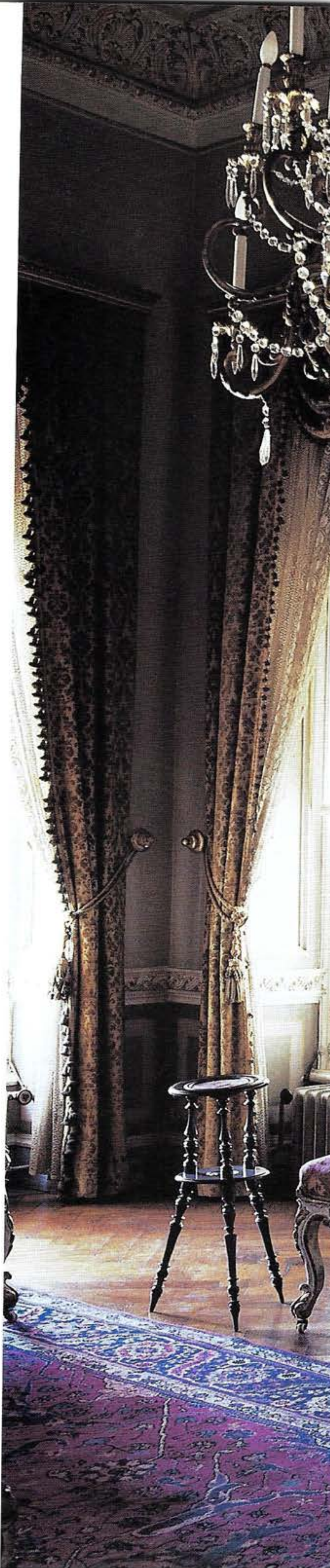
Under the new Turkish Republic the building had an unhappy year, in 1925–6, as the Casino Muncipal de Yıldız Dancing-Restaurant and Tea Room-Bar – *"Entrée 50 piastres"*. The tango was danced in the Ceremonial Saloon. Subsequently the Chalet Kiosk has been used for international congresses and to house visiting heads of state, including Elizabeth II. Since 1985 it has been open to the public. It is so well preserved, and so rarely visited, visitors can imagine that they are not tourists but the Sultan's guests.

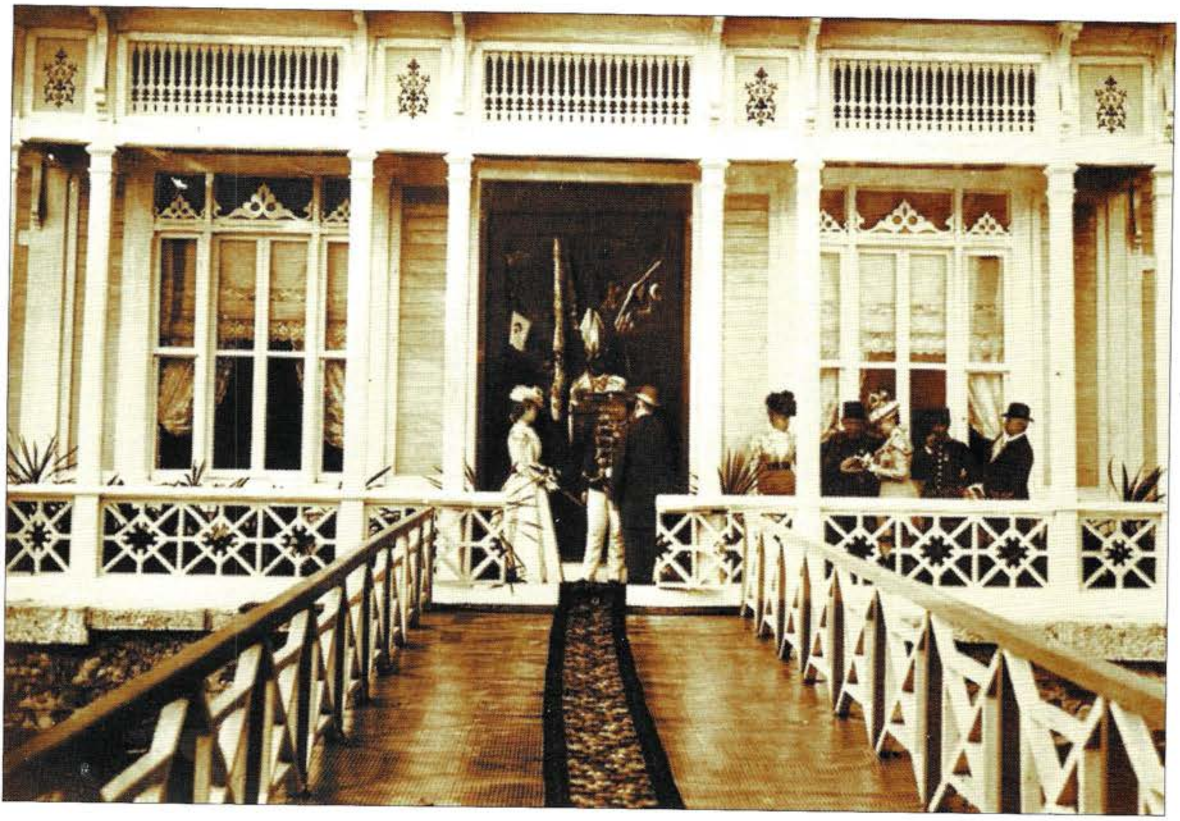
*Philip Mansel is the author of 'Constantinople: City of the World's Desire 1453–1924' (John Murray, £25, Penguin, £9.99). His next book, 'Paris Between Empires 1814–1852', will be published by John Murray in 2001.*

*Şale Köşkü (Chalet Kiosk): open 9am–4pm except Mon and Thurs, tel 90-212 259 4570. The entrance is at the top of Yıldız Park, close to the Malta Köşkü restaurant.*

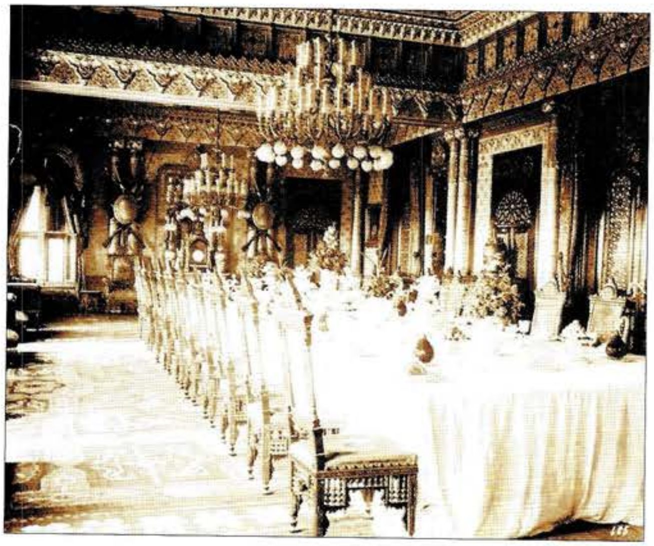
*A detailed study of the Chalet Kiosk by Feryal İrez and Vahide Gezgör appears in the National Palaces Journal, 1992.*

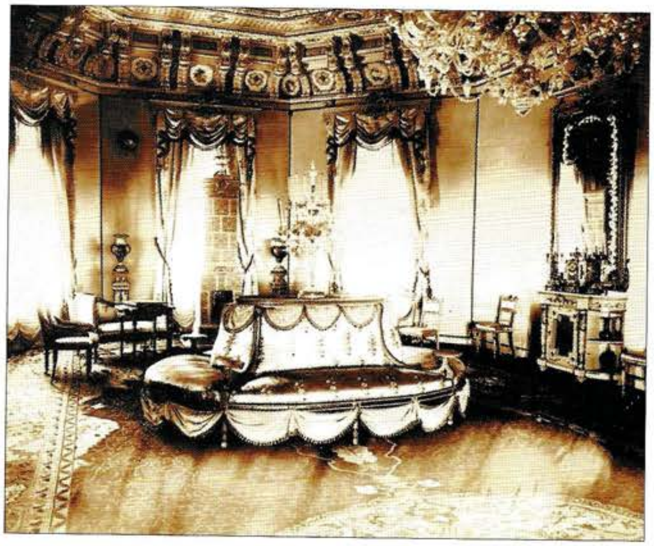
*A new book, 'The Last Kaiser: William the Impetuous' by Giles MacDonogh (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £25), explores the character of the Emperor.*





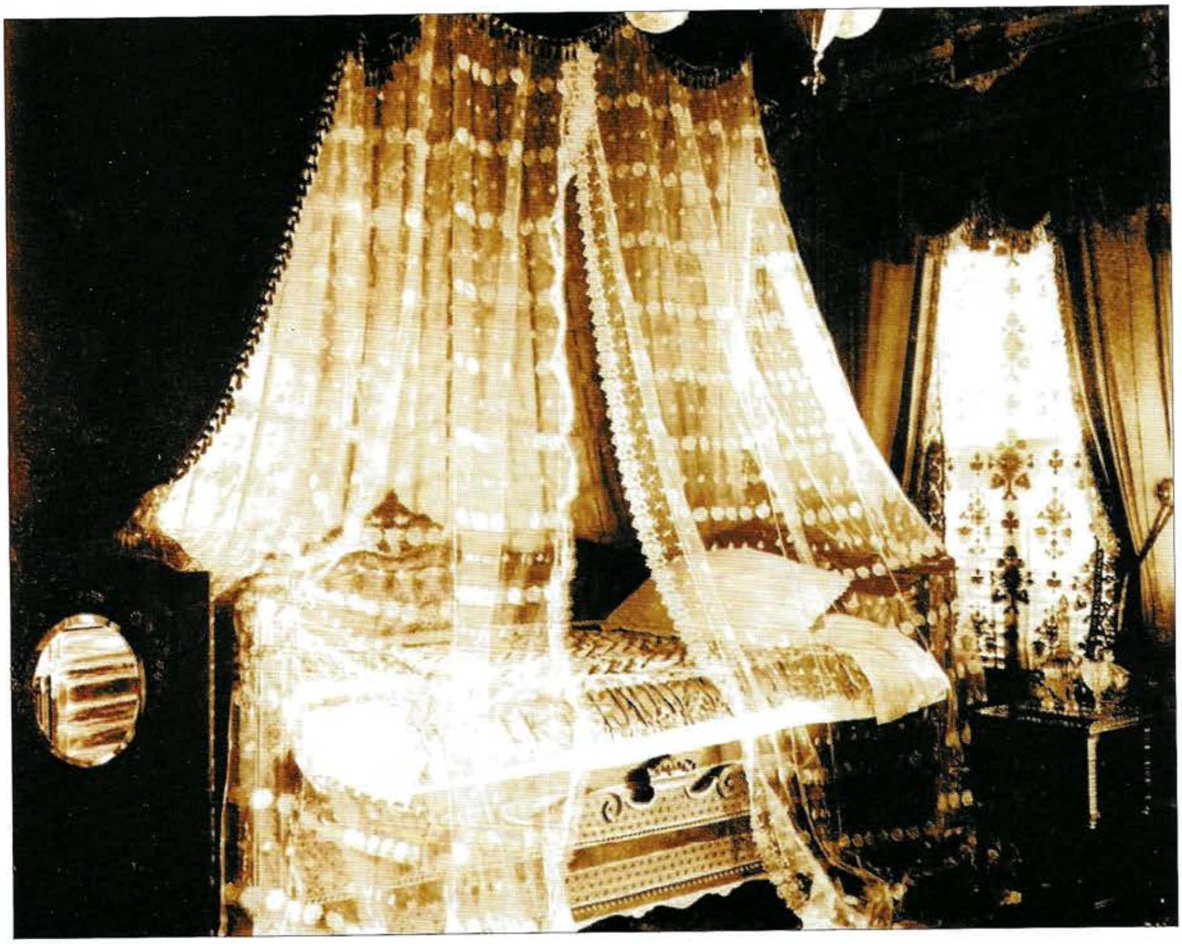
All photographs: Yildiz Collection, IRCICA

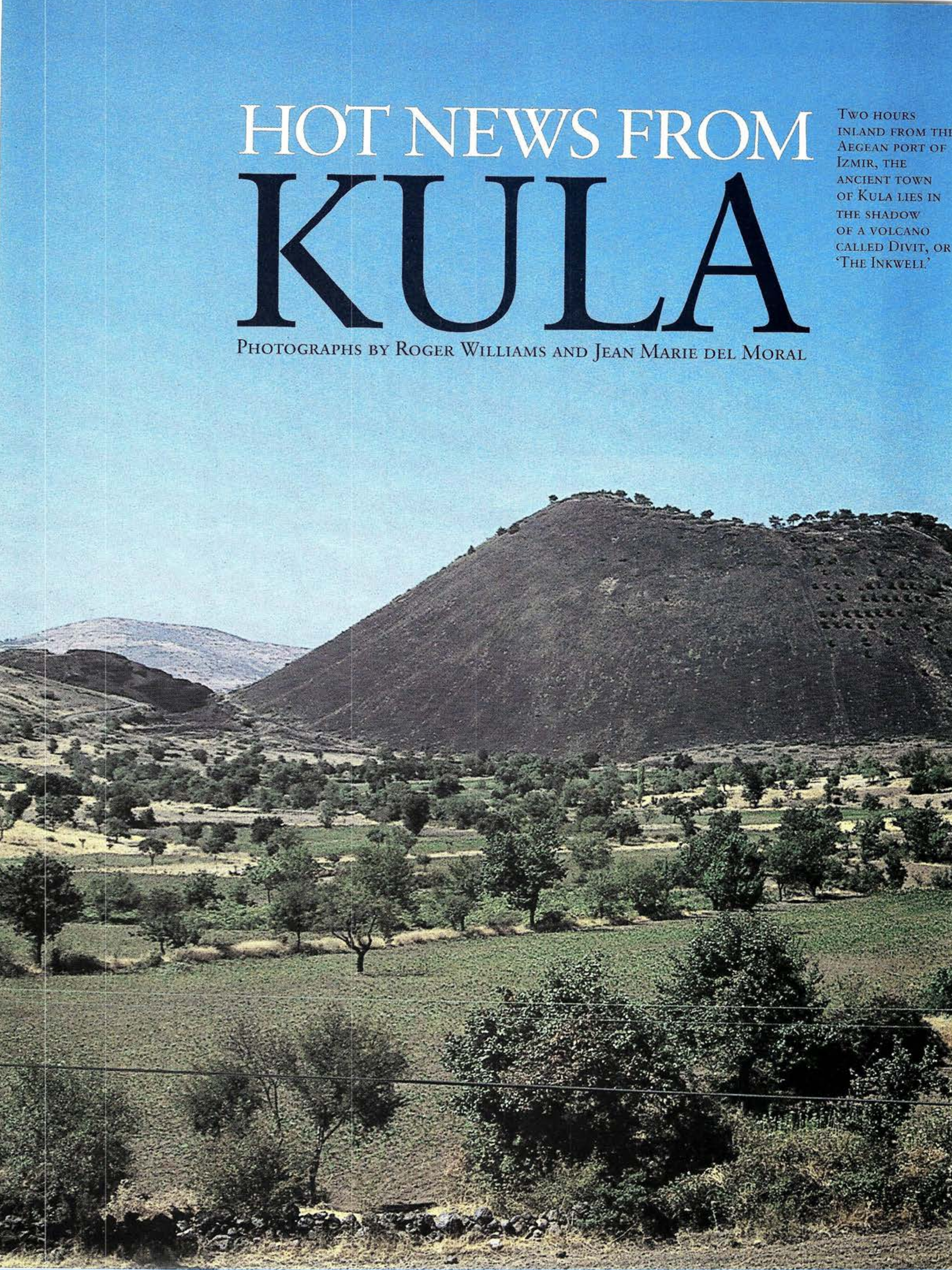




## When the Kaiser came to stay

The first of Wilhelm II's three state visits to Istanbul was a spontaneous move, against Bismarck's advice, during a visit to Athens in 1889. It left the Sultan in Istanbul almost no time to prepare the Chalet. The second, in 1898, was better planned, breaking a journey to the Holy Land. Among his entourage were an orchestra and a huge number of clerics. The third, in 1917, was shortly before the Allied occupation of Istanbul – ever passionate sightseers, the Kaiser and his Empress still walked the city walls. Top, this page and opposite: the Kaiser and Empress Victoria Augusta ('Dona') at the silk factory in Hereke, 1898. The Chalet was intended as a showcase for Ottoman wares, with displays of porcelain from the new Yildiz factory and acres of Hereke carpet. Court photographers, most notably Abdullah Frères, recorded every detail in 1900: the dining room (above left), the ambassadors' reception room (above right), and the Kaiser's quarters (right)





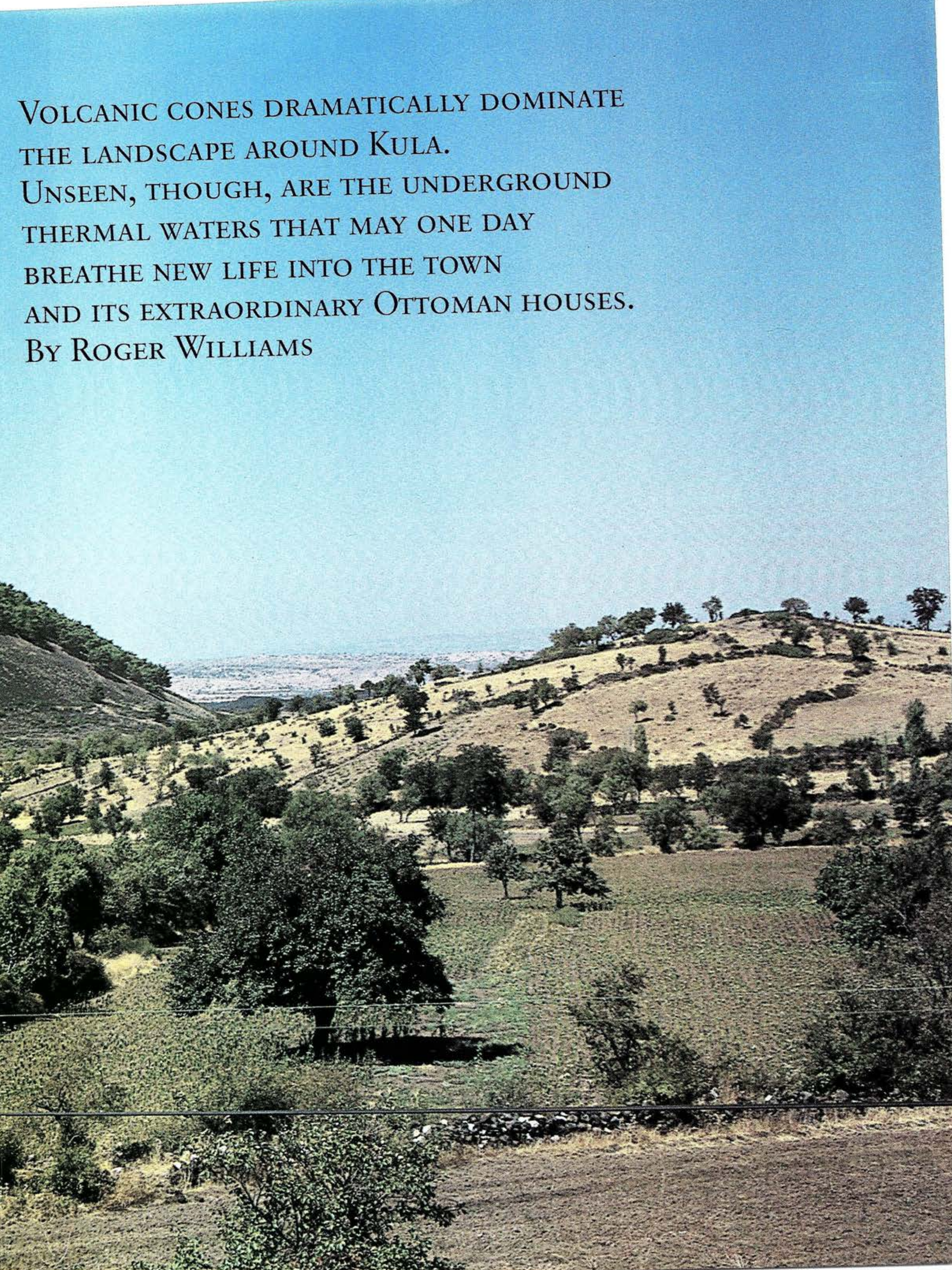
# HOT NEWS FROM KULA

Photographs by Roger Williams and Jean Marie del Moral

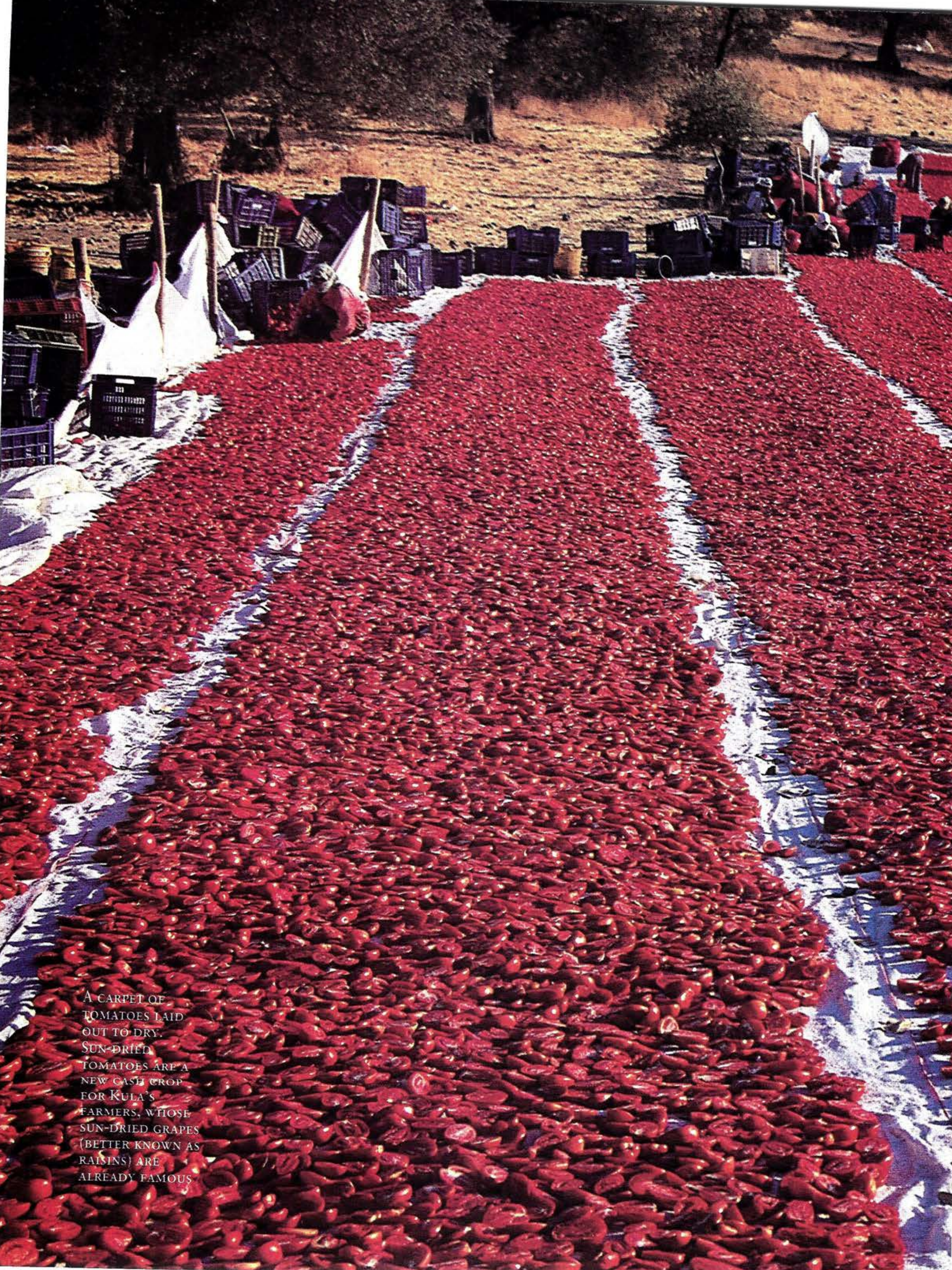
Two hours inland from the Aegean port of Izmir, the ancient town of Kula lies in the shadow of a volcano called Divit, or 'The Inkwell'

Volcanic cones dramatically dominate the landscape around Kula. Unseen, though, are the underground thermal waters that may one day breathe new life into the town and its extraordinary Ottoman houses.

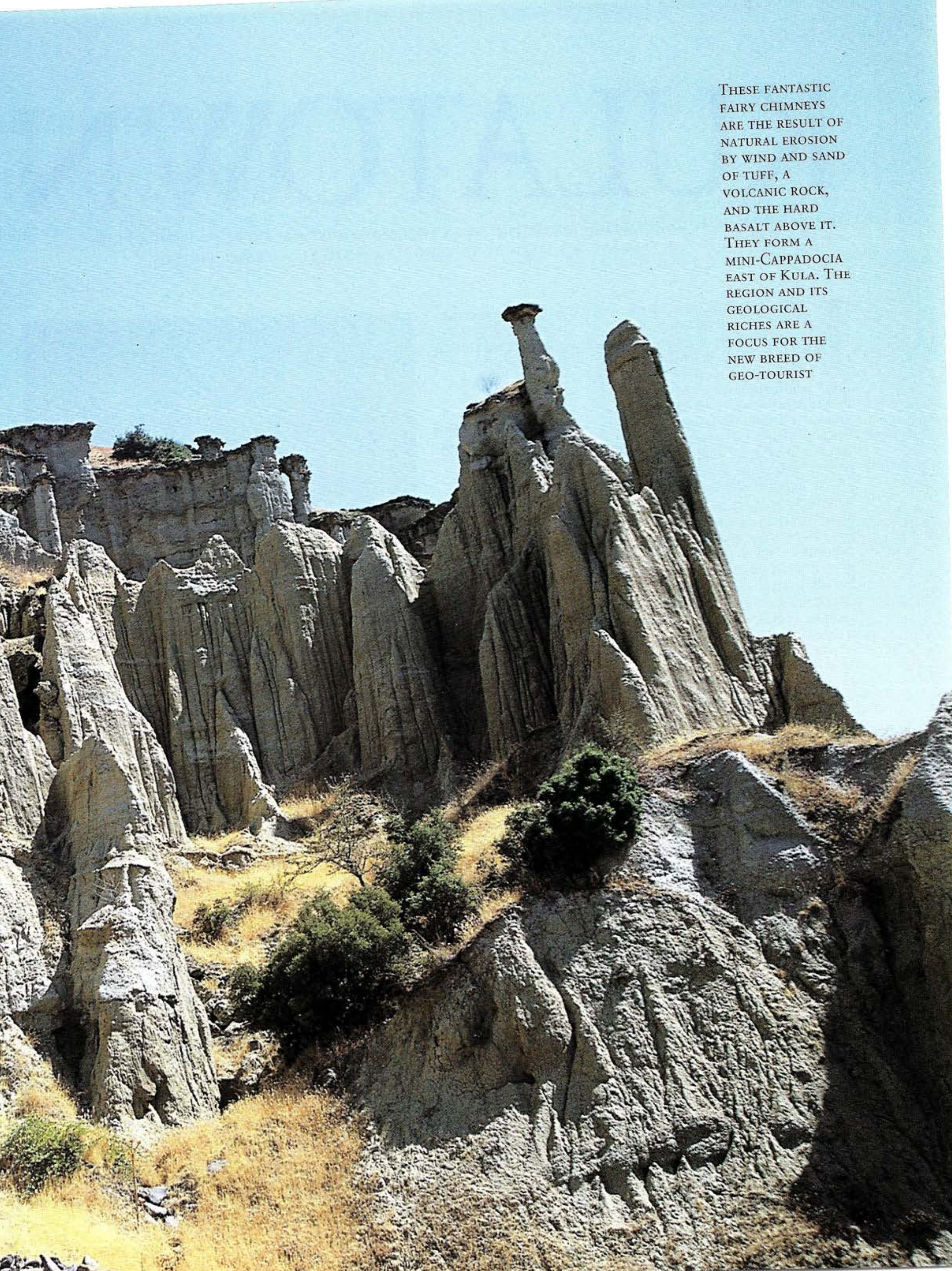
By Roger Williams



An open-air swimming pool may soon be built to contain the hot spring known locally as 'The Bubbler'. It would be inviting all year round, but especially in winter, when snow is thick on the ground. The spring already feeds the nearby baths of Emir Hamamlari



A carpet of tomatoes laid out to dry. Sun-dried tomatoes are a new cash crop for Kula's farmers, whose sun-dried grapes (better known as raisins) are already famous.



These fantastic fairy chimneys are the result of natural erosion by wind and sand of tuff, a volcanic rock, and the hard basalt above it. They form a mini-Cappadocia east of Kula. The region and its geological riches are a focus for the new breed of geo-tourist

# KULATOWN

## To save its fine but crumbling architecture, a volcanologist has come up with a plan: to turn Kula into an elegant spa town by tapping its plentiful thermal springs

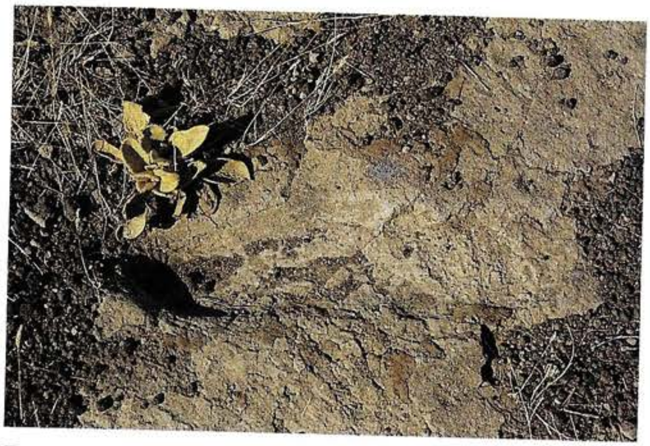
Kula is thought to be the town referred to by the Greek geographer Strabo as Katakekaumene, from *kata kamen*, meaning "burnt fires" on account of the old volcanoes that tuck the town up like well-plumped pillows. These slumbering cones, mostly fertile now and overgrown with fields of wheat and tobacco, wild pear and melons, first erupted a million years ago. The youngest lava-flows, dramatic black humps creeping across the sea of meadow greens, are 10,000 years old, and these last eruptions reveal the imprints of human and domestic animal feet, showing that the area was settled in Neolithic times. The town has even given geologists the word "kulalite", to describe a local, naturally occurring composite material.

Here, 140 kilometres from the Aegean coast, Mediterranean mildness begins to give way to the continental extremes of the Anatolian steppes. Maize, grapes, chickpeas and peppers flourish, and although courtyards burst with quince, mandarin and jasmine, winters can be harsh. Snow falls for a month or two each year.

All this I now know. But I began my journey to Kula ignorant of both its geography and its history, aware only that there was a collection of fine Ottoman and Greek houses worth seeing. The starting point was instructive in itself. I was for the first time in Izmir, formerly Smyrna, a town with names as delicious as figs and pomegranates, with a fine natural harbour ploughed by ferries and freighters that recalled Lawrence Durrell's timeless, romantic characters awaiting the Smyrna packet. The modern buildings on the seafront (only two old ones remain, inhabited by the Atatürk Museum and the Greek Embassy), a mercifully unfinished new road like a runway alongside the sea, and an odour from the water (caused, I was told, by pollution from tanning that could be solved only by deep-dredging the entire port) could not diminish this sense of romance.

Kula seen from the ancient Persian Royal Road

Just a glance at the map showed half of history was here. This was Lydia, the ancient kingdom of wealthy Croesus. Up the coast was Pergamon, from which Berlin's great museum of antiquity takes its name, and Phocea, whose inhabitants, chased out by the Persians, had been the first Greeks to settle in France, at Marseilles, and in Spain. Down the coast was Ephesus and the site of one of the world's Seven Wonders, the Temple of Artemis. It was like connecting up the West End of London with the City for the first time: the ancient world began to make more sense.



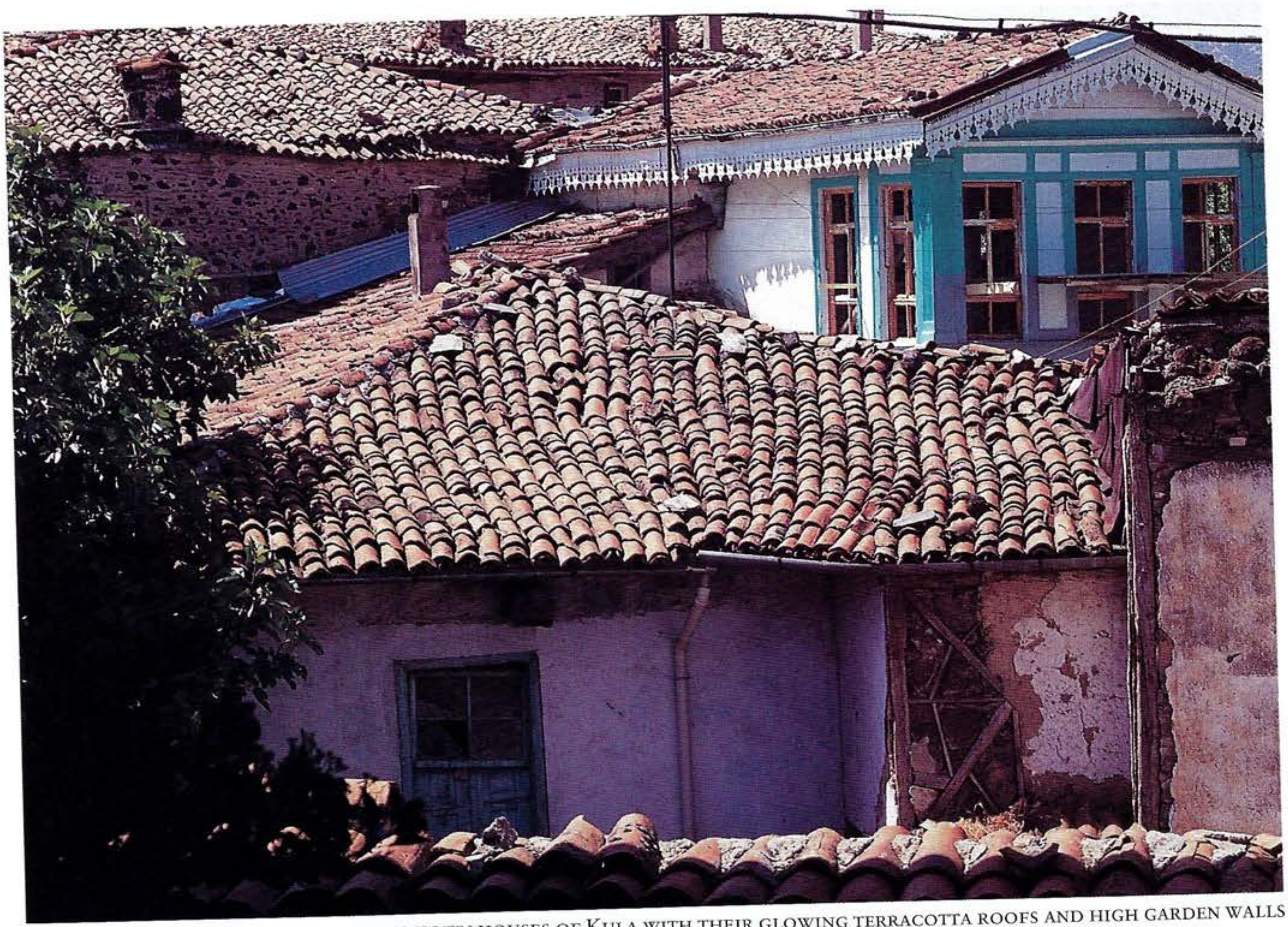
Footprints left in volcanic ash 10,000 years ago

Yılmaz Savaşçin was my guide to Kula. Bearded, ebullient and in his early fifties, he is a volcanologist and professor of geology at the University in Izmir. His enthusiasm for his scheme to tap local thermal waters to heat Kula and turn it into a spa resort makes him the perfect guide for a two-day excursion: the first day in Kula town, the second exploring its many geographical wonders, which he hopes might attract a "geo-tourist" industry, to the benefit of the proposed spa resort.

Temporarily relieved of the burden of a driving licence, Professor Savaşçin had sequestered a driver from the municipality of Kula, and on a Friday morning, as workers disembarked from ferries and Levantine businessmen rolled up their sleeves for a day's work in the office, we set off on the road to Ankara, the ancient highway and former Persian Royal Road, to Anatolia's interior.

Professor Savaşçin sketched in the history of the area as we went, from the Neolithic and ancient world to the twentieth-century community of Islamic and Christian Turks and Orthodox Greeks who had built the mansions of Kula. "Too many people, too much history," he said. "Too much, too much." I was glad I had mugged up a little before I arrived, otherwise I am not sure how much I could have taken in. John Freely's *The Aegean Coast of Turkey*, published by Redhouse Press in Istanbul, proved particularly helpful.

Though mostly single carriageway



CHEEK BY JOWL, THE BEAUTIFUL GABLED TOWN HOUSES OF KULA WITH THEIR GLOWING TERRACOTTA ROOFS AND HIGH GARDEN WALLS

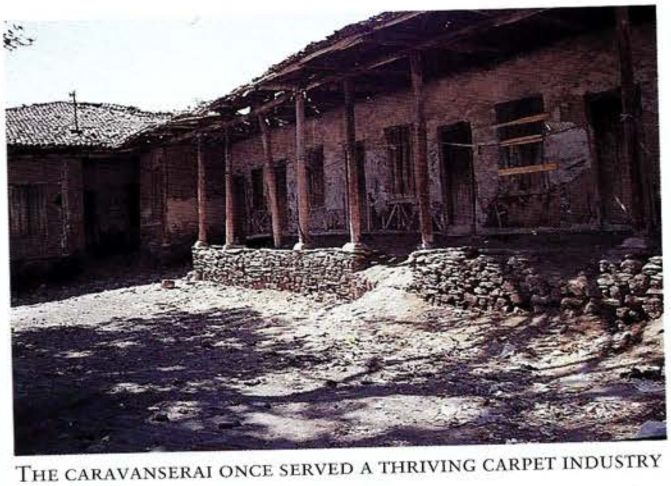
and occasionally slowed by lorries overwhelmed by their cargoes, the road was an easy drive. The urban landscape was soon replaced by miles of mellow brick factories, which in turn gave way to fertile fields.

In forty minutes we had crossed the Ecelkapısı Çayı, the golden River Pactolus of antiquity, and stopped by the roadside at the village of Sart, an unhurried country community, where we took tea before seeking out the village's former glory, the ruins of Sardis, capital of Lydia. The city's fabulous wealth was based on the Pactolus, which washed gold down from Mount Tmolus (Bozdağ). In 640 BC King Gyges produced the world's first coinage here and, among several acres of ruins around a Temple of Artemis, a mint has been found, where coins were made of electrum (gold and silver) using furnaces resembling a battery of domestic ovens.

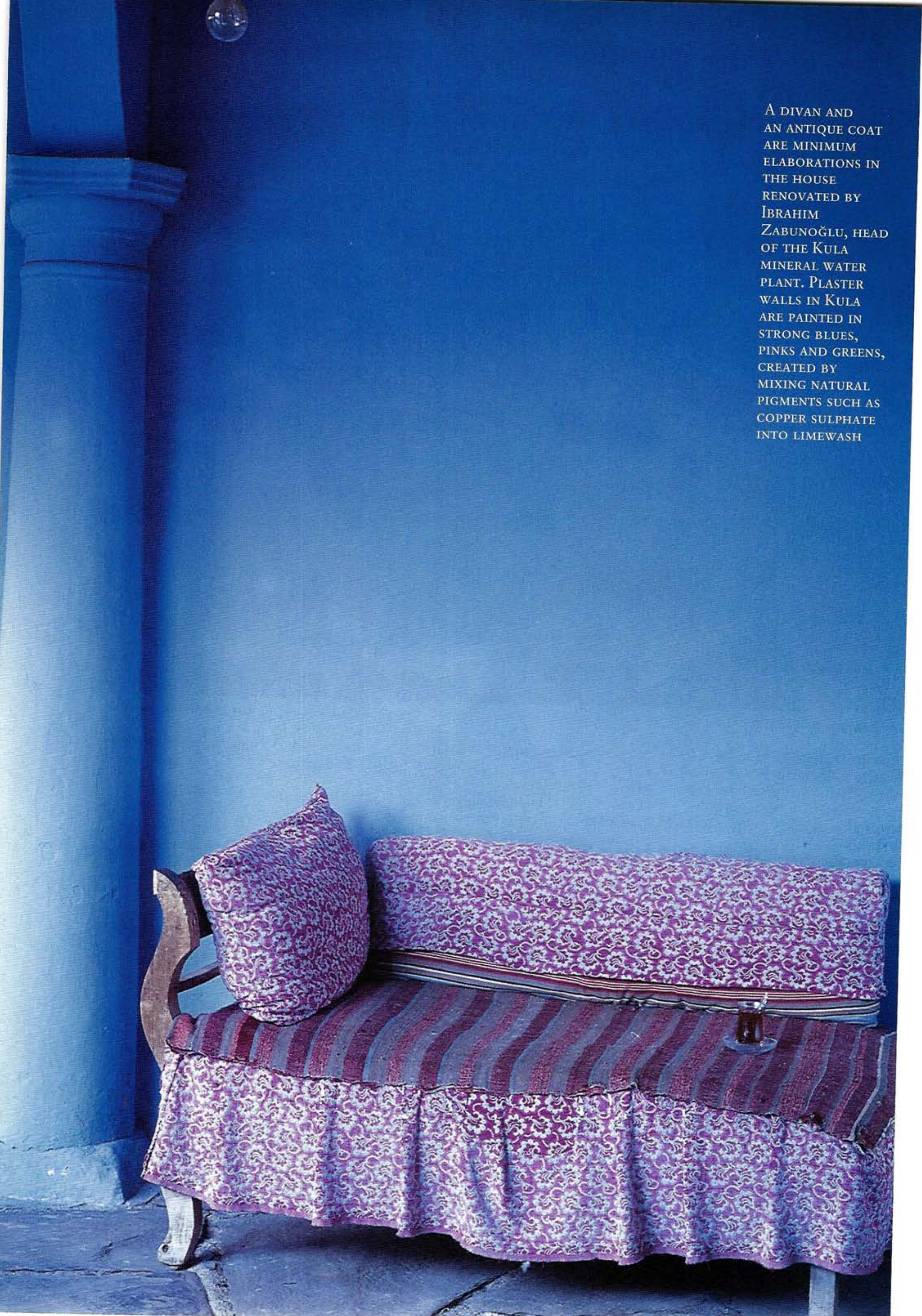
On the opposite side of the main road are the remains of the Roman business quarter of the town, with the largest synagogue of the ancient world, built around AD 230 as part of a gymnasium. According to Freely, it is "an outstanding example of Roman architecture without parallel in Asia Minor". Beside the synagogue is a row of shops several hundred metres long, their known proprietors and businesses labelled "Jacob's paint shop" and so on. Excavations are still going on, and there are apparently plans to reroute the highway to reunite the two halves of ancient Sardis.

After Sart is Salihli, a larger town already heated by thermal water. From here the road crosses the valley between fields where carpets of plucked grapes sizzle in the sun. Raisins are a speciality of the region. But the red-striped fields we later saw were a surprise to Professor Savaşçin, who had not seen tomatoes drying in such a way. A vogue crop, this; perhaps one day the marketing men will re-label raisins "sun-dried grapes".

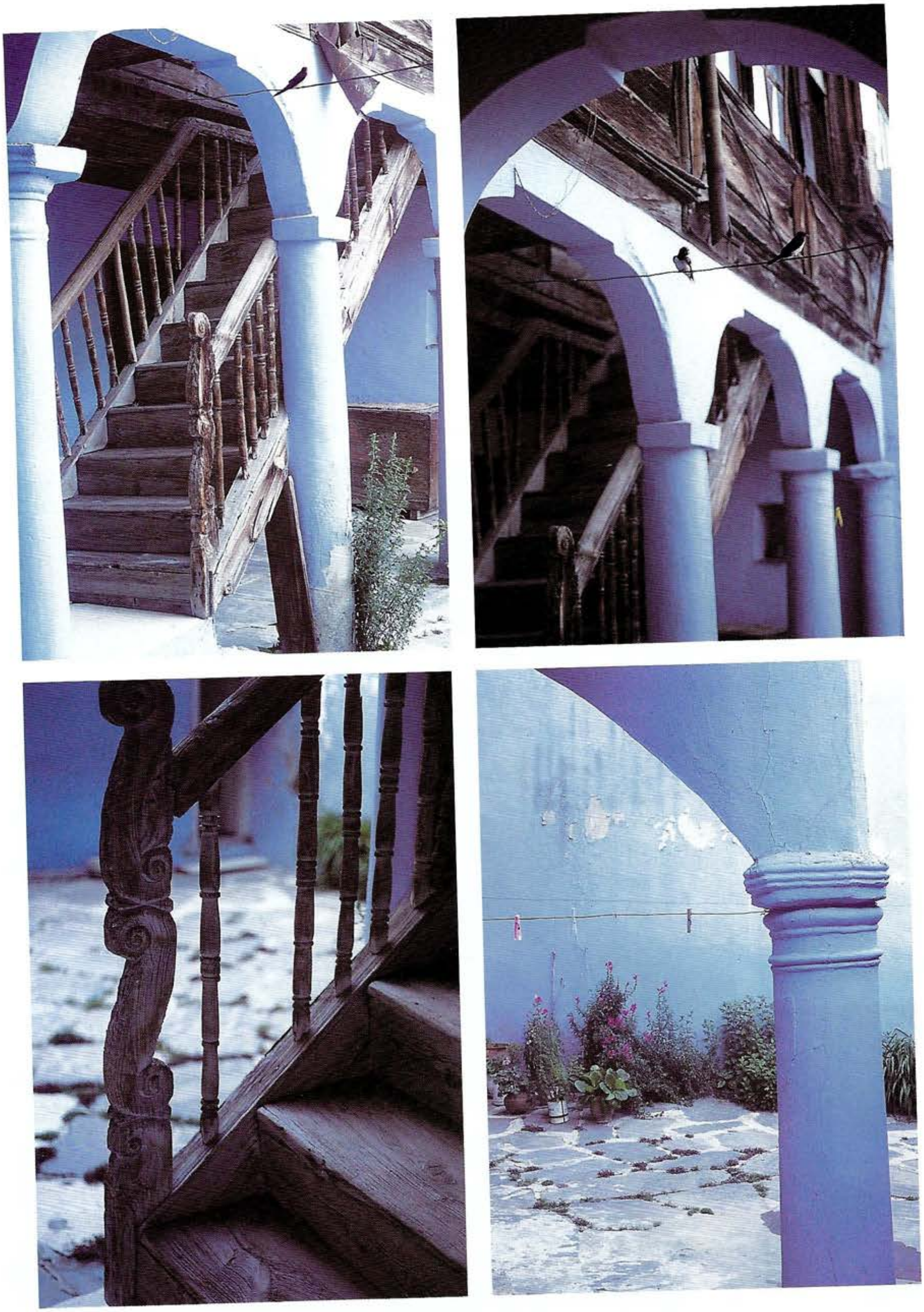
On the other side of the valley the road climbs the Uysal Dağı to Kula. Unlike most towns we have passed, Kula is not sliced up by the highway, but lies almost entirely tucked away on its north side beneath a volcanic cone called Divit, Turkish for "inkwell",



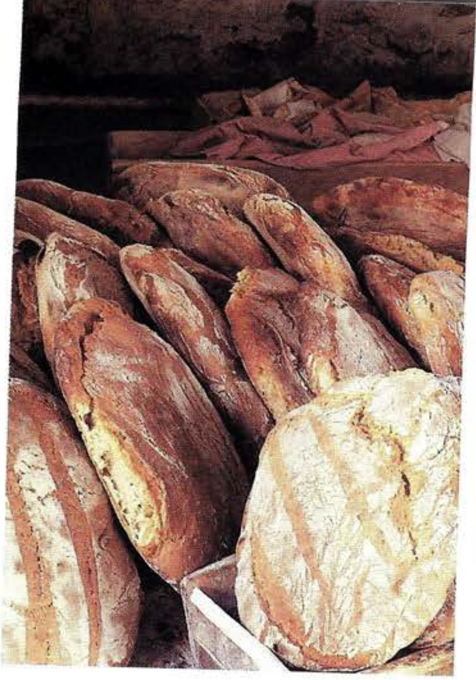
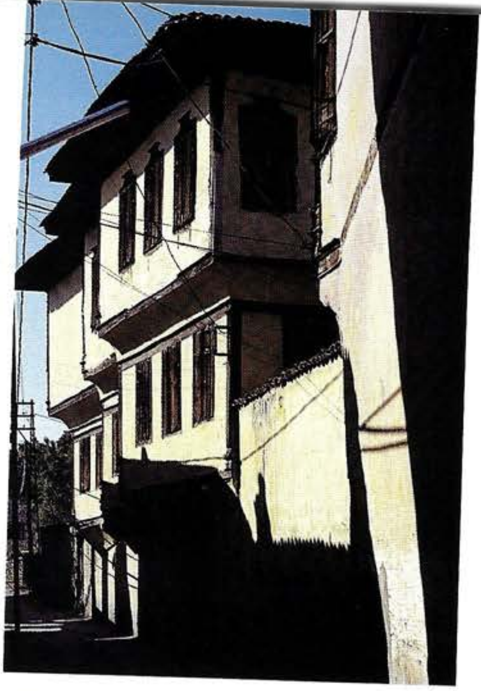
THE CARAVANSERAI ONCE SERVED A THRIVING CARPET INDUSTRY

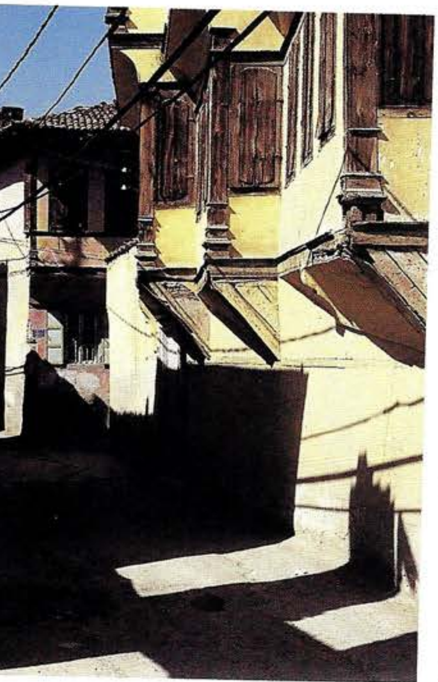
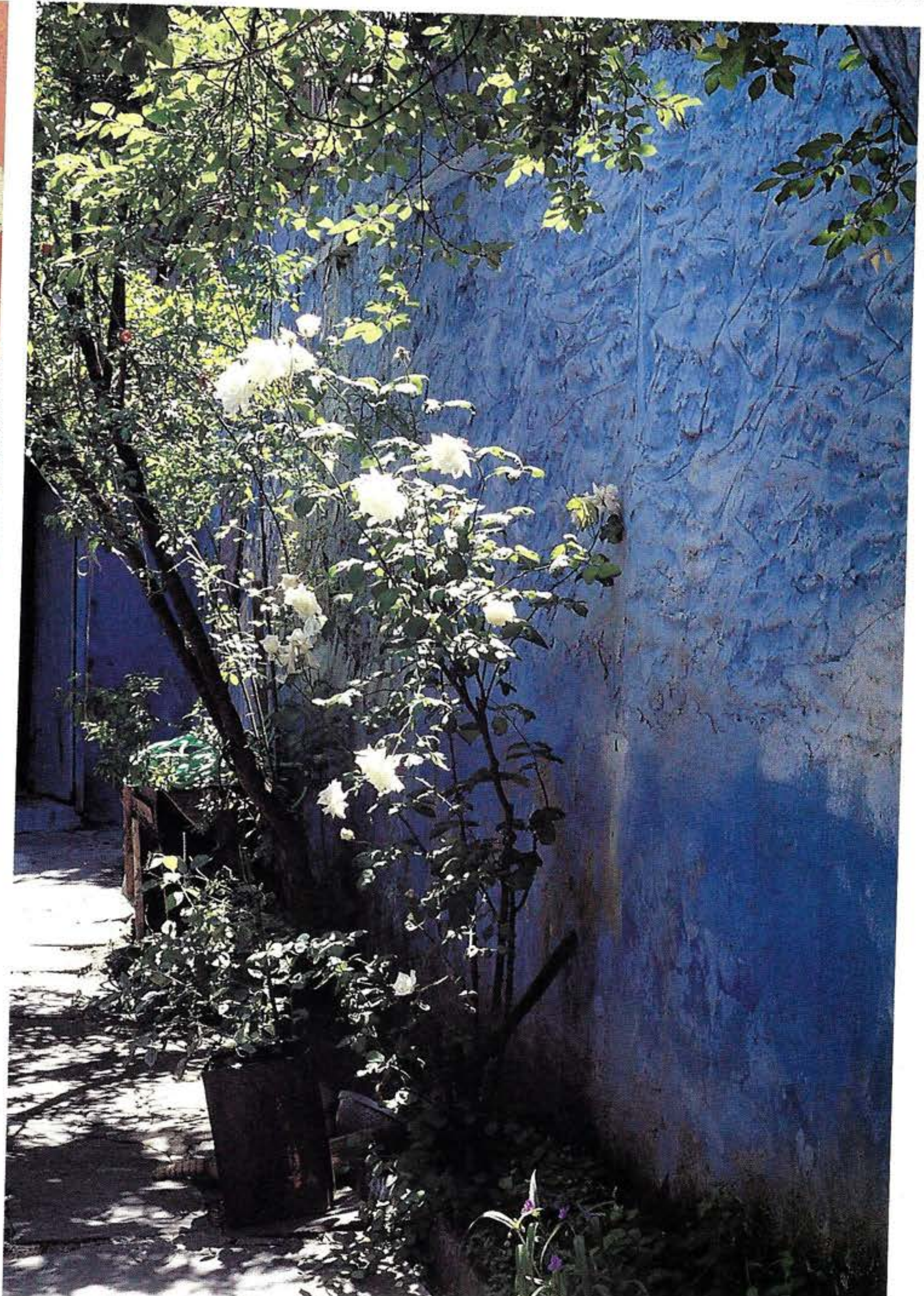


A divan and an antique coat are minimum elaborations in the house renovated by Ibrahim Zabunoğlu, head of the Kula mineral water plant. Plaster walls in Kula are painted in strong blues, pinks and greens, created by mixing natural pigments such as copper sulphate into limewash



The courtyard, once used for cooking, laundering and keeping animals, is an integral part of a Kula house. Wooden stairs lead to a large trap door that could be closed for protection. Beyond it is the hayat, the main living area, which may be open to the courtyard or enclosed by windows. The most important rooms were on the street side. The colonnade in this house shows classical influences. Opposite: niches were built into the walls for oil lamps

which describes its shape.

Selim Aşkın, an economist and Kula's Chief of the Municipality, greeted us and joined us in the town square restaurant for lunch: rice, bean stew, yoghurt, chicken. Aşkın is greatly in favour of Professor Savaşçin's plans to turn the old town houses into a spa resort. There don't seem to be too many other schemes on the table for alleviating unemployment, which he says is the biggest problem among the 21,000 inhabitants.

Like the more famous Uşak, the next main town on the road inland, Kula prospered by carpet-making, which flourished between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. After the First World War there were two Turkish and three Greek carpet factories here. This harmony of the two peoples, which is evident in the architecture of the old houses, is confirmed by papers in the municipality which Aşkın has recently discovered. These show that in 1921 Greeks and Turks were represented on the town council in almost equal numbers.

After the War of Independence three brothers started Kula Mensucat Fabrikası, a carpet factory which went on to spin and weave textiles. At its height it employed 1,200 workers. When it moved to Izmir in 1950, it was catastrophic for the town, and for half a century Kula has been struggling to recover.

After lunch, walking through the old town to the mansions, it is clear that Kula is already quite an attractive proposition. In its orderly streets of one- and two-storey buildings, the traditional crafts are kept alive in *arasta*s, quarters named after their specialities – the ironmongers' *arasta*, the copper makers', leatherworkers', tailors' – liberally laced with cafés and barbers' shops. The paved streets, wide enough for vehicles, are occasionally overhung with jasmine and escaped vines.

Market day is Monday, but on this Friday afternoon there was still much to see. Craftsmen were busy in their blackened caverns, working over forge fires, tinning copper kitchen utensils and hammering glowing ironmongery on anvils, while cleaner hands were shaping shoes and sewing suits. There are still two saddlers in business, a chickpea processor and a shop selling oils made from hashish, sesame and grapes. At a carpet shop, run by Özcan Külahcı, traditional Kula carpets can be bought and ordered, at around 150 dollars a square metre. Kula may not be as famous for carpets as its neighbour, Uşak, but, with a good supply of local wool, it has an honest pedigree, and there are examples in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul.

Mid-afternoon is not exactly the most sociable hour to come calling, but as we headed into the lanes of many mansions on the far side of the commercial centre, we were invariably greeted politely and with interest by all whose doors we pushed back. Unused to tourists, the residents were curious and sociable. Tea was offered, water, too.

Invisible strings seemed to connect many of the occupants with their courtyard doors, so that when the doors were pushed, they would simultaneously rise from their divans. Our intrusions were not unwelcome, our questions were readily answered, though few knew the history of the old houses, and none knew the names or occupations of the Turks and Greeks who built them. Some women were weaving carpets for Özcan Külahcı. One or two houses had farm implements and logs, but there was otherwise little sign of a connection between these houses and an agricultural economy.

A young housewife showed us around the home she and her husband have recently bought. The purchase price was reasonable, she said, but it was proving expensive to renovate, because of the many regulations imposed to ensure the buildings remain in keeping with the original styles.

There is growing interest in the buildings of Kula. Architecture students now come to study them and make them the subject of their theses. But this does not help to rescue them from decay. There are supposedly 900 identified, and that means a lot of work. "Too much, too much," said Professor Savaşçin, as we retired to the divan of the hamam in a nineteenth-century Turkish mansion that the municipality has taken over and restored. In the house opposite, a museum has been made of the birthplace of Kenen Evren, seventh President of the Republic. It has been furnished as it might have been when he was growing up. In one room a table was laid with places for half a dozen people. Professor Savaşçin was dismissive. "People didn't eat like that, with separate plates," he said. "There was always just one bowl that was put in the middle of the table, which everybody shared."

Not all restored houses can become museums, and it is often a problem to know what to do with them once they are habitable. Professor Savaşçin mentioned several well-known restored houses in Turkey that are empty or underused. The municipality's mansion in Kula is meant to be for local use and public functions, but is silent for much of the time. There are other problems. Craftsmanship is in short supply and not always of the highest calibre. It would be unkind to criticise the efforts of the local municipality, but Professor Savaşçin indicates some of the carpentry and the coloured glass in the room to make his point. Of course it all comes down to money, and Professor Savaşçin is currently trying to raise funds for his spa-town scheme from sympathetic organisations in Europe.

If his plan works, if thermal baths are introduced, and if the result is restaurants, hotels and recreation centres occupying the old mansions, then the streets, no more than lanes, may become the lively places they must have been 150 years ago, when merchants,

Beneath the lime-washed plaster, Kula's houses are timber-framed, crossed to give support against earthquakes, and infilled with straw, clay and stone. Some of the lanes in the old quarters are so narrow that you can almost shake hands across them between the overhanging bays of the upper floors. High walls conceal shady gardens where women still weave the famous Kula carpets, though the last factory has moved away to Izmir. People still roll their own dough at home and take it to the baker's to be baked manufacturers and landowners and their families lived in style. Horses' hooves and carriage wheels would have brought women's faces to the windows of the overhanging *cumbas*; beasts of burden would have hauled in winter fuel and produce from the fields; there would be gossip by the town well and the courtyards would buzz with news from the latest arrivals at the caravanserai, and from Izmir.

Apart from the distinctive Greek and Ottoman styles of building, there is no sign of the cultural mix that once made up the town. Any evidence that Greeks or Orthodox Turks from Karaman were once here is gradually disappearing, But Professor Savaşçin identified a lion device over a fireplace in one of the houses, which suggests that it belonged to somebody from the Alevî sect, who, like many dervishes, do not pray in mosques. There are, he said, still a number of the sect's members in Kula today. Since Professor Savaşçin's last visit, however, Kula's church has lost its doors as well as its Karamanlı gravestones, and the whole building is set to follow Kula's caravanserai into the dust of history. Tomorrow, Professor Savaşçin said, he will show me Greek inscriptions on a nearby bridge.

Before that, though, there was socialising to be done. That evening we were invited to a wedding where guests sat a dozen to a table. Food came and went in large bowls and was communally shared, just as Professor Savaşçin had said it was traditionally done. The music in the square afterwards he also pronounced authentic, the belly dancers, too.

Next morning, as pipes and drums escorted a crowned and fur-caped young lad on his merry way to a circumcision, we headed out to see the geographical sites. This time I took the wheel, and though driving was enjoyable, I could have gone nowhere without the professor, for nothing was signposted, and even he occasionally became lost and we had to stop to ask the way. Kula's countryside is sparsely populated arable land with few wayside diversions. It rolls with laconic ease, through fields of wheat and tobacco, maize and melons, with twittering skylarks and bobbing wagtails. Beside the fields are wild pear trees, almonds, poplars. Driving in such countryside is an undemanding pleasure.

We started off by heading north, passing the black lava flows so stark against the green fields that they look as if they have just arrived, under the darkness of the night. After thirteen kilometres we crossed the Hoca Seyfettin bridge over the River Gediz where we stopped to find the stones engraved in Greek. They were no longer there. Below, by the river's banks, spiky grass was the apparent telltale sign that thermal water came to the surface here. This is where Professor Savaşçin plans to tap the hot water and pipe it to the town.

Ten minutes' drive further north is the Kula water-bottling plant, producing 20,000 bottles an hour to slake the country's thirst and earning its boss, Ibrahim Zabunoğlu, the wherewithal to begin renovating the old mansion he has bought in Kula. Professor Savaşçin stopped here to inspect a new pumping system. Through the university, he is employed as a consultant for the plant.

Another of his projects is some twenty minutes further on, at Emir Hamamları. This is a watering-hole in the middle of pretty much nowhere which has had three waves of occupation. Carved stones from a necropolis are the only visible remains of the Roman baths. An Ottoman bath is still used by local people who come here for their health. And there is a new group of terraced guesthouses which have baths incorporated in their basements. Professor Savaşçin has sunk two pipes here in an attempt to enlarge and update the complex. He also has his eye on Fokurdak (The Bubbler), a nearby naturally bubbling hot spring which he fondly imagines as an attractive outdoor pool that could be used year-round, even in the snow.

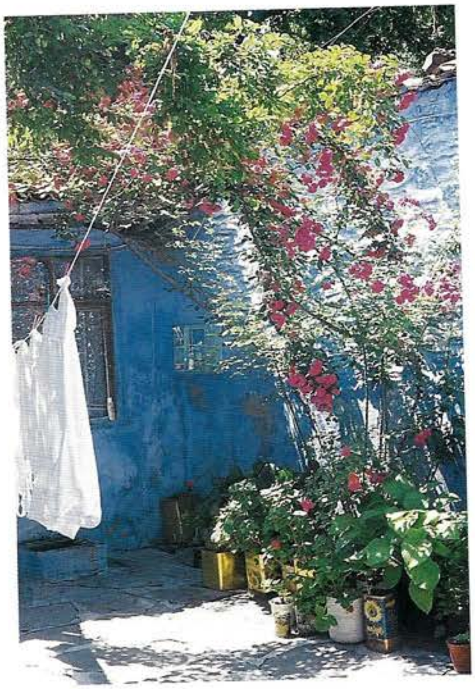
Hedonists may be tempted, but Professor Savaşçin, a veteran guide who started bringing students on tours to Turkey when he was at university in Germany, wants to show off the region's peculiar geological sites, too. Apart from the thermal springs and volcanic legacies, there is the extraordinary mini-Cappadocia of fairy chimneys east of Kula, which we head for next. There is little to do with this Mesolithic wonder other than get out of the car and stare.

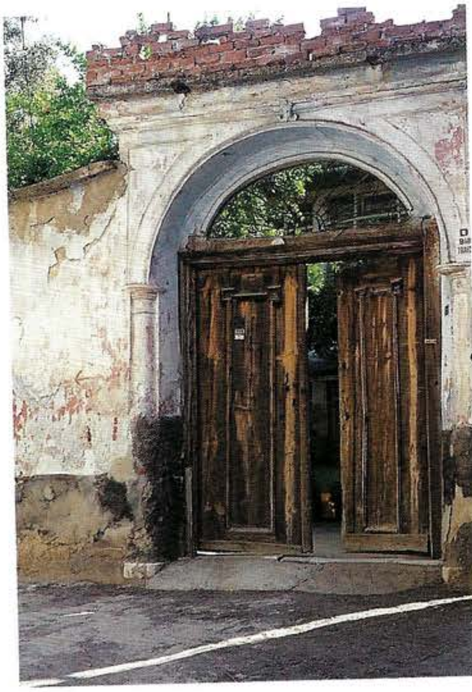
Another of Professor Savaşçin's "finds" is Neolithic footprints of man and a domesticated animal, a dog, perhaps, and a cow. These lie to the west of Kula, impressed in cooling ash on the west bank of the Demirköprü Barajı and proving that there was domestic life here 10,000 years ago.

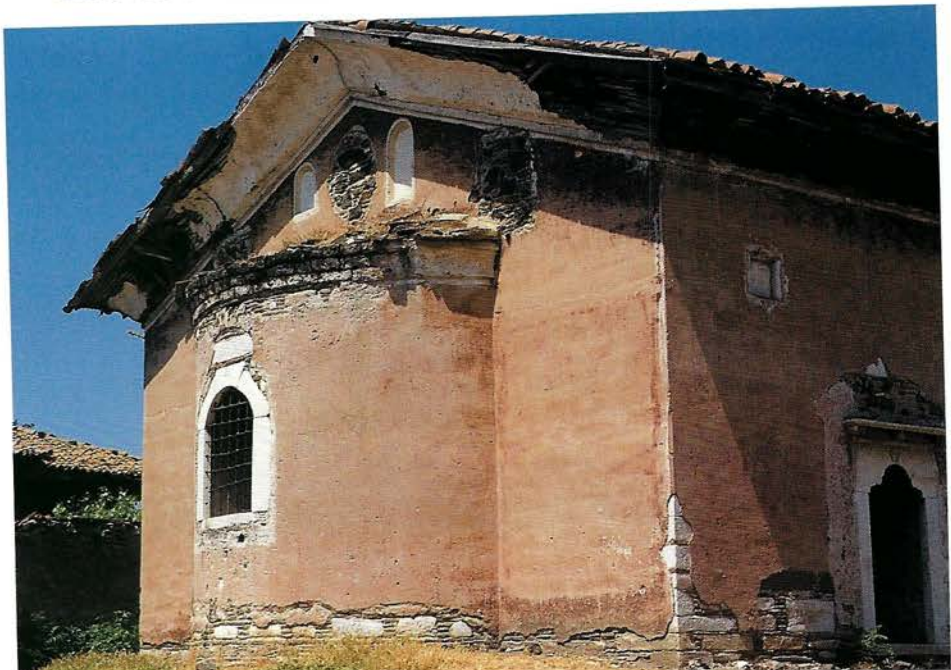
From here we returned to the Gediz plain, where regular hillocks began to rise around us. Professor Savaşçin once brought an Italian volcanologist here and asked him to guess what they might be. The Italian could not imagine that these were man-made tumuli, the Thousand Hills of Bintepe. Lydia's last and wealthiest king, the legendary Croesus, was buried here, but it is uncertain which of these mounds was his. Some may even have been created as dummies to fool thieves. They may still contain enormous burial hoards, like the Lydian treasure that began to appear in America some thirty years ago. A campaign for its return went on until 1993, when these rich artefacts were finally sent back to Lydia; they can now be seen in Uşak's main museum. I would like to go to Uşak and see them. I would like, too, to visit the nearby town of Manisa, ancient, thermally heated Magnesia, home to Ottoman princes and with a substantial archaeological museum. "Too much, too much," as the professor would say. The geo-tour is drawing to a close and we must return to Izmir. The art tour will have to wait for another day.

*Roger Williams is the author of the novel 'Lunch with Elizabeth David' (Little, Brown, 1999, price £15.99)*

Kula has an interesting mix of styles that attracts many young architects writing theses. There are Greek elements, such as double-fronted buildings with central doorways, pillars and ironwork with lyre motifs. Characteristically Turkish are the overhanging bays, or cumbas, and the high garden walls with imposing double doors leading to courtyards. The carved wooden capital opposite is Seljuk in style. The church has been unused since the Turkish–Greek population exchanges of the 1920s







## Travel Notes

Kula lies 140 km east of Izmir and is easy to get to by bus, but the only real way to see the region round the town is by car. The journey takes 90 minutes. A two-day hire from Izmir would cover the main sites, but if you want to see the Lydia treasure in the museum at Uşak and take in Manisa, then allow three days. This itinerary has Manisa and the Lydian Kings' burial site at the end of the trip, but being closest to Izmir, these could be visited first.

From Izmir, the first stop should be Sart, for the archaeological site of **Sardis**. Make sure you see the Greek and Roman remains, which are not immediately visible, on both the south and north sides of the road.

**Kula** is 50 km further on. There are two modest hotels in the town, the Vulcan and the more modern, roadside Duglas. The volcanic area lies mainly on the north side of the town. The Kula mineral water plant, and the Roman necropolis and Turkish baths of Emir Hamamları are about half an hour's drive north of the town, but they are not signposted, and you may need to ask directions. The fairy chimneys east of the town are visible from the main road by the village of Burgas. You will need a guide to find the Neolithic footprints beside the reservoir of Demirköprü Barajı. The drive is impressive, with many lava flows in evidence. **Uşak**, depository of the Lydian treasure, and famous for its carpets, is 78 km further west.

The burial mounds of the Kings of Lydia, in the region known as **Bintepe**, are northwest of Sardis and south of Marmara Gölü. Though there is no Visitor Centre, there are treasures everywhere and the whole place is extraordinary to drive through.

Finally, northeast of Izmir, **Manisa** is well signposted. Its archaeological museum has items from Sardis. This was an important Ottoman town, and a training ground for Ottoman princes. The sixteenth-century Muradiye Mosque, by the court architect Sinan, has some of the finest Iznik tiles ever made.

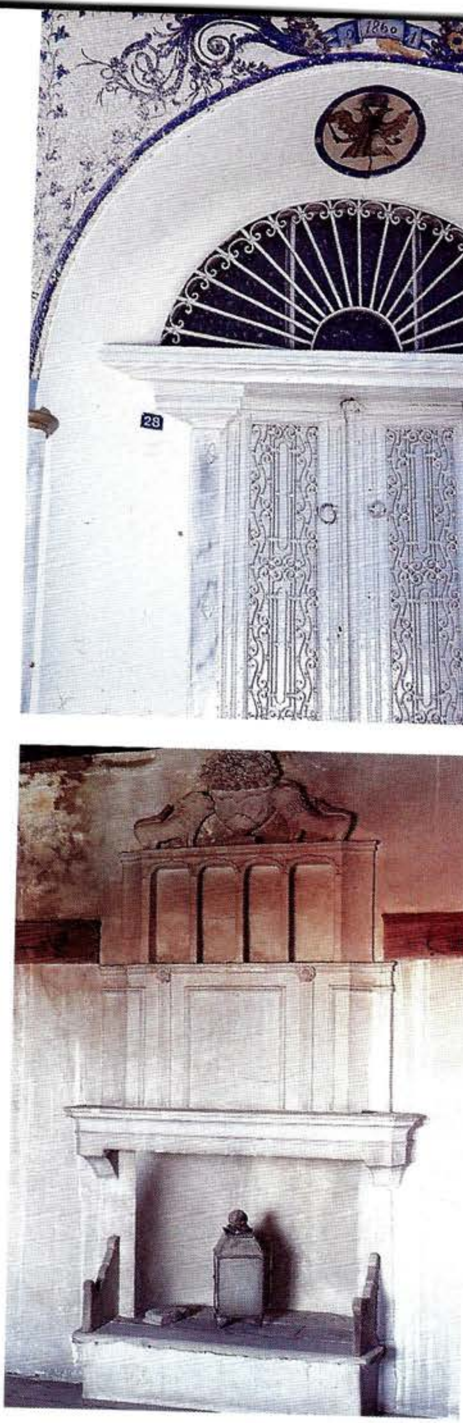
For architecture lovers with more time to spare, the neighbouring valley of the Küçük Menderes River (the Little Meander) is worth exploring for its fine old Anatolian houses and mosques. Go south from Salihli and drive over the Boz Dağları mountains to the towns of Birgi and Tire.

### Hotels in Kula

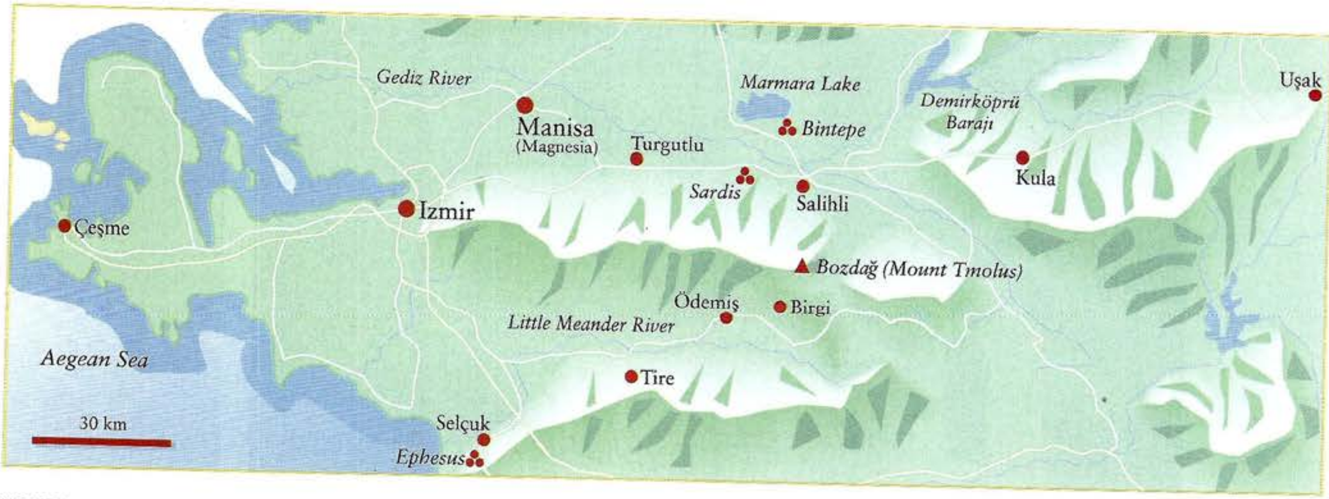
Duglas Hotel,
tel 90-236 816 5496
Vulcan Hotel,
tel 90-236 816 3000

### Car Hire in Izmir

Avis,
tel 90-232 441 4417-19
Europcar,
tel 90-232 441 5141
Sixt Rent-a-Car,
tel 90-232 489 9493



MULTICULTURAL KULA. RIGHT, FROM TOP: THE DELICATE FANLIGHT OF A GREEK HOUSE; THE ITALIANATE FIREPLACE IN THE ZABUNOĞLU HOUSE HAS SCULPTURES OF LIONS THAT MAY SHOW A CONNECTION WITH THE ALEVÎ SECT. OPPOSITE: THE BEAUTIFUL NEGLECTED GRANDEUR OF AN OLD KULA COURTYARD



# THE BERLIN BRAIN DRAIN

IN THE PERIOD SURROUNDING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, MANY OF GERMANY'S GREATEST BRAINS FOUND A HAVEN IN TURKEY. THEIR INFLUENCE WAS WIDE – FROM ECONOMICS TO TOWN PLANNING, FROM MEDICINE TO MUSIC. AS A NEW EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS GOES ON TOUR, NORMAN STONE LOOKS BACK AT THE LEADING LIGHTS OF THIS REMARKABLE EXODUS

Of all the great German brains who took refuge in Turkey between 1933 and 1953, the most human seems to have been Professor Gerhard Kessler. Professor Kessler had been brought out of a Nazi concentration camp in 1933 by the Turks; he had been a Democratic Party member of the Saxon parliament, had become professor of sociology at the new Ankara University, and greatly loved Turkey. The Turks loved him, too: he was a generous and generous-minded polymath, who put up poor students in his own house, gave unstintingly of his time, wrote several very useful textbooks, and had a curious hobby – Jewish surnames.

Kessler eventually went back to Germany – and a very high academic position – but he pined for Turkey and returned in the mid-1950s to the new, American-funded University of Erzurum. By then, to hold a Turkish chair, you had to become a Turkish citizen, and there was a ceremony: flowers, tears, the national anthem, medals, men kissing each other on the cheek, and emotional speeches from the head of this and that. Professor Kessler's salary was halved, as Turks were paid less than foreigners, but I doubt he very much minded – peace to his soul (he died in 1963).

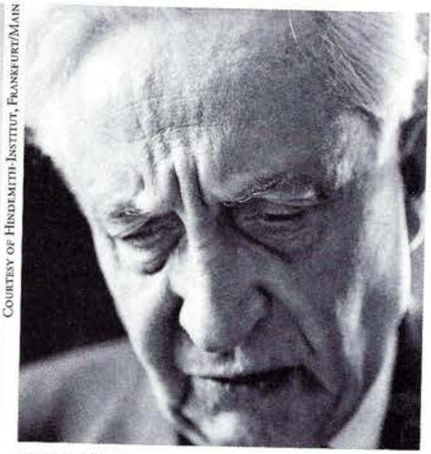
Another German refugee of that vintage is far better known. In 1948, when the Soviet blockade of West Berlin began, its lord mayor, Ernst Reuter, became a heroic figure for the West as he rallied his people from despair at the apparently impossible task of defying Stalin. Reuter knew the Communists because, as a young prisoner-of-war in Russia in 1917, he had become one. In 1922, like many other Germans, he recognised the nature of the beast and became a Social Democrat, lord mayor of Magdeburg, and a member of the Reichstag. By 1933 Hitler was after him, but, with the help of the Quakers, he got out of a concentration camp and eventually to Ankara, where he taught town planning (with a side-suit as an import-export consultant and adviser on tariffs).

Reuter, who was very tall and lanky, and rode around town on a bike wearing a beret, was an inspiration to the new school of politics, which trained a very large part of the Turkish elite of those electric years. His Turkish was so good that, when the language was being reformed, to adapt it for purposes of universal literacy, Reuter invented some of the words.

Berlin in 1914 had been the Athens of contemporary Europe – even, if you count its influence on the United States, of the world. Three members of the British cabinet that went to war in 1914 had studied at German universities. One of these, Richard Haldane, was an expert on Hegel. In 1933 a sizable part of that

THE COMPOSER PAUL HINDEMITH (1927)

COURTESY OF HINDEMITH-INSTITUT, FRANKFURT/MAIN



CARL EBERT SET UP THE STATE OPERA

AKADEMIE DER KÜNSTE, BERLIN

HANNA AND ERNST REUTER (1946)

THE ARCHITECT BRUNO TAUT (1933)

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM *HAYATMATLOZ: EXIL IN DER TÜRKEI*, VEREIN AKTIVES-MUSEUM, BERLIN

Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Istanbul

Clockwise from top left: skiing at Uludağ (1938); the Ruben family with the village milkman (1939); summer on the Princes Islands; Dr Eckstein with a nargile (1937); Silvia and Firmin Rohde in Sunday best (1936); Wilhelm and Margarete Schütte, Park Hotel, Istanbul (1938); Gerhard and Wolfgang Ruben; Silvia Rohde and her nanny (1938). Centre: the Ruben boys again

Athens had to take refuge abroad, and perhaps the most distinguished element of it came to Turkey. Given its scale, this may have been the most distinguished Central European emigration ever. Its only rival is probably the Hungarian emigration, via England, to the United States. That gave us much of Hollywood and of the bomb.

Turkey took about 300 academic exiles from Central Europe. About two-thirds of them were Jews; not all had left-wing opinions. Wilhelm Röpke and Alexander Rüstow, polymathic Hayekian economic liberals who (like Ernst Reuter, but in a very different way) were architects of today's Germany, left Hitler's Germany out of moral disgust.

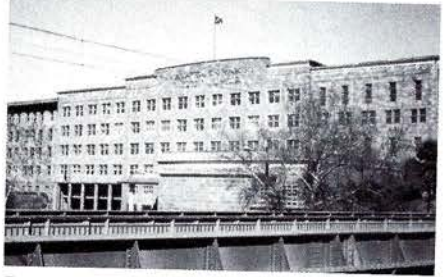
The immigration had a great impact on Turkey, and to this day you will meet people who remember these people directly, or who know of them, because their teachers so often referred to them. There was the Hirsch (Ernst) who taught law, and the Hirsch (Julius) who taught medicine. There was the professor of medicine, Rudolf Nissen, who spent much of his time curing people for nothing, and whose forays into the countryside were commemorated by peasants who named their children after him. There was Fritz Neumark, professor of accountancy, whose Turkish was good enough within two years for him to serve (with the legal Hirsch) on government education commissions. His memoirs are a noble book, one of the classics of modern Turkey.

Albert Einstein would have become professor of physics at Istanbul had he not also been expected to teach – which, with a shake of his poor little head, he said he would not do: instead he went to Princeton and thought.

But if you know Germany at all, the list is breathtaking. There was the architect Bruno Taut (who died in Ankara in 1938). In music the composer Paul Hindemith was a frequent visitor to Turkey, recommended by the conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler. He advised a Swiss architect on construction of the conservatoire (in that era, only Western classical music was played on the radio). Béla Bartók, a friend of Adnan Saygun, the outstanding Turkish composer, was also frequently in Turkey, where he studied the connections between Anatolian and Balkan folk music. With Carl Ebert from the Berlin Opera, Eduard Zuckmayer (brother of the novelist) and Ernst Praetorius, Weimar's musical director, Turkish music was firmly put on the European map.

It was a similar story with oriental languages and mathematics, where the brothers, respectively, of the historian Gerhard Ritter and the economist Ludwig von Mises distinguished themselves.

Bauhaus architecture in the new Ankara, town-planned by exiles



Bruno Taut's monumental Faculty of Literature at Ankara University

Enlightenment régimes, pushing for modernisation and deep reform of existing structures, need foreigners: Peter the Great's Academy of Sciences spoke mainly German. In the early 1930s, Atatürk's Turkey wanted a proper university. There was an old institution in Istanbul, the *Dar-ül-fünun*, or House of Knowledge. It seems to have been one of those dozy but rancorous pre-Enlightenment institutions that enter legend – much like, say, the University of Salamanca in 1776, where the Faculty of Law set only one examination question annually, to be answered in Latin: "What language do the angels speak?"

Legend may be wrong, and there are mutterings that what happened to the House of Knowledge was unjust, because it did contain its own modernisers. However, the minister of education, Reşit Galip, accused its academics of lacking sympathy for the linguistic and other reforms. The modernisers wanted mass literacy, which meant using the Latin alphabet – far more suitable for Turkish than the Arabic one, because it has a proper vowel system. They also wanted to standardise the language, ridding it of resonantly poetic Persian or Arabic words in favour of more down-to-earth Turkish ones. This, as Neumark himself complained, impoverished the language.

Reşit Galip and his successor, Hasan Ali Yücel, took advice. The American John Dewey came, and a lengthy report was made on existing higher education by a Professor Malche, a Swiss who said what such inspectors always do say about universities – too many people, too little work, not enough money, foreign languages awful, not enough done for research, etc. It was insufficient to create chairs of the Western type, said Malche; what was needed was a new spirit altogether, which meant a clean sweep.

At any rate, the *Dar-ül-fünun* professors were mainly dismissed and, in May 1933, coinciding with the 23-carat exodus from Hitler's Germany, a new University of Istanbul was set up (followed shortly by one in Ankara). It took over Enver Pasha's War Ministry, and its main auditorium was the Sultan's riding school. By 1943 it had 10,000 students, half of them women. Roughly two-thirds of the senior staff was at one stage foreign. The emigration to Turkey was organised through a medic, Philipp Schwarz, in Switzerland: he had had Ottoman military connections. The German academics set up an "emergency co-operative" *(Notgemeinschaft)* to help each other, as they had done in the great Weimar inflation. Professors who found work abroad donated a month's salary for those who did not.

There was a long tradition of foreign staff in the Ottoman Empire – reaching as far back as Mehmed the Conqueror's artillery specialist, a Hungarian called Urban (who had offered his services first to the Byzantine emperor, who thought them too expensive). Now, the Westernising Turks needed a larger, more coherently organised group of foreigners who would cultivate positivism: science,

Dr Erna Eckstein in 1930. With her husband, Albert, also a paediatrician, she helped to cut Turkey's infant mortality almost by half in 15 years facts, callisthenics, equality of the sexes.

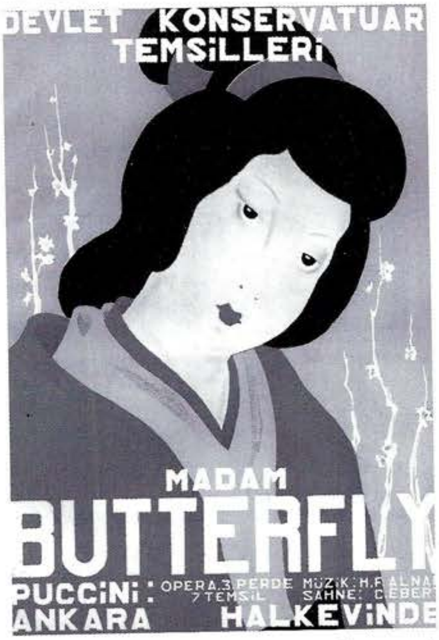
Ankara, town-planned by the Austro–Germans, was to be its monument – in fact, its principal library was installed by the chief librarian of Frederick the Great's *Preussische Staatsbibliothek*, Walter Gottschalk (who did not leave Germany until 1941). Reşit Galip compared the results with the flight of Byzantine scholars to the emerging Renaissance Italy of the fourteenth century.

By autumn 1933, thirty-eight of these exiles were congregating in Istanbul, at the Park Hotel. The official welcome was very good, and Fritz Neumark had to have a Greek tailor run up a morning-coat in a great hurry, so that he could cut a proper figure at receptions.

Even the German consul of the time, a Herr von Fabricius, was helpful (he was no doubt one of the quite substantial old guard in German public service who were vastly embarrassed at what was happening to his country's most distinguished academics). The exiles, of course, responded. Neumark, not a man for naive hero-worship, met Atatürk once, at a reception in the Pera Palas Hotel, and said he knew he was in the presence of greatness.

Besides, the Turkish state had handled it all quite efficiently and sensibly. The terms were very good, considering the circumstances. The new academics had five-year contracts (generally renewed) and were paid 500 or 600 Turkish Lira (about £300, rather more than a judge or member of parliament, and rather more than comparable salaries in Germany, though less than in Great Britain). That money, net of tax, went a long way in Istanbul. The exiles lived well. They had commodious, well-placed houses, where they spent evenings making music and staging debates. There were boating expeditions on the Sea of Marmara, and their children could receive a good education in the French- or English-language schools (some attended the German one, expecting Hitler to fall quite quickly; instead, official Germany turned against them, depriving them in 1940 of their citizenship). One of the dentistry professors, Alfred Kantorowicz, established Uludağ as a skiing centre. The mathematician Hans Reichenbach helped train the Turkish ski team.

Some of the exiles adapted remarkably quickly – Neumark's Turkish was good enough by 1939 for him to serve on the national educational council (together with Ernst Hirsch, who did much to adapt Turkish law to European standards). There was, inevitably, resentment among some of their Turkish colleagues. It took the form of small-scale obstruction, surreptitiously organised by the dean – laboratory equipment not delivered, the allocation of small offices, hostile remarks in the local press. The answer was to make an immediate fuss. Malche resigned in protest, and help was enlisted from a general close to Atatürk. The devious dean was dismissed, a more sympathetic one appointed. The outcome, in terms of well-trained Turks who remembered their teachers with respect and affection (and detail), was excellent.



Carl Ebert's production of Puccini's Madam Butterfly in Ankara, 1942

By 1950, when the old guard of Republicans lost power, things became slightly less comfortable for the foreigners. Wartime inflation damaged salaries, children grew up. Nowadays, they might just have stayed in Turkey and intermarried, but in those days it was hardly thinkable (I know of only one case). As the West settled down again after the war, they mainly went back.

Fritz Neumark became rector of Frankfurt University, where he was outstandingly fair-minded, free of rancour (the only people he seems truly to have disliked were the Frankfurt School exiles Horkheimer and Adorno, who came back from New York, and whom he regarded as pains in the neck).

Wilhelm Röpke and Alexander Rüstow had had many thoughts, during their time in Istanbul, about how the modern state should be constituted, and what had gone so badly wrong in Germany. Both became very influential. West Germany's Basic Law *(Grundegesetz)* has some title to be considered the most efficient and humane constitutional document of modern times. It says all the right things.

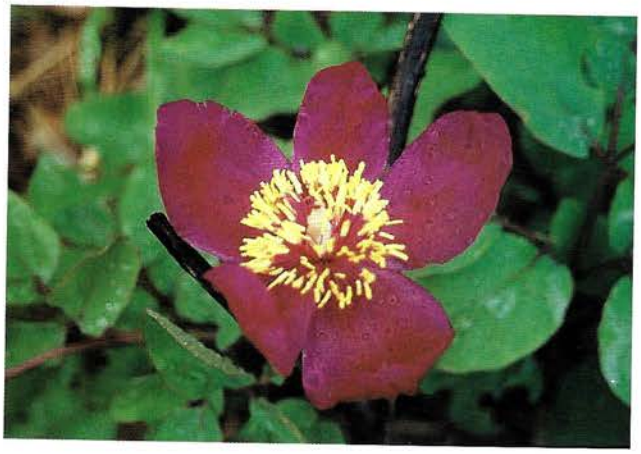
The *Grundegesetz* as Turkey's gift to Germany? It would be a fitting conclusion to one of the twentieth-century's all-too-few truly uplifting stories. ◆

*Professor Norman Stone is director of the Russian Centre at Bilkent University, Ankara. He is the author of 'The Eastern Front 1914–1917'*

*The exhibition 'Haymatloz: Exil in der Türkei 1933–1945', which covers the life in Turkey of the German exiles and their families, has been in Istanbul and Berlin and is currently touring Germany. For details of venues and to order the excellent catalogue (text in German, price DM38), contact Berlin's Verein Aktives Museum, tel 49-30 2815198, or visit their website, www.aktives-museum.de.*

Carlota Ruben, wife of an Orientalist, and her sons Gerhard and Wolfgang

# THE SECRET GARDEN OF KASNAK



High in the Toros Mountains, Chris Gardner finds the remote Kasnak Forest carpeted with peonies in spring.

Photographs by Kate Clow

Dawn reveals towering limestone peaks tinted with soft sunlight and mirrored in the calm of a vast inland lake. It is a cool May morning at Lake Eğirdir, in Turkey's southwest, and we are here to search out the rare orchids and tiny alpine flowers which thrive in this rugged landscape.

As any self-respecting botanist will tell you, Turkey in spring is a land of bewildering variety. Here, within the Toros Mountains, lie many different habitats, each filled with myriad floral gems. Yet one particular day, the day we spent among carpets of peonies, stands out from all the rest.

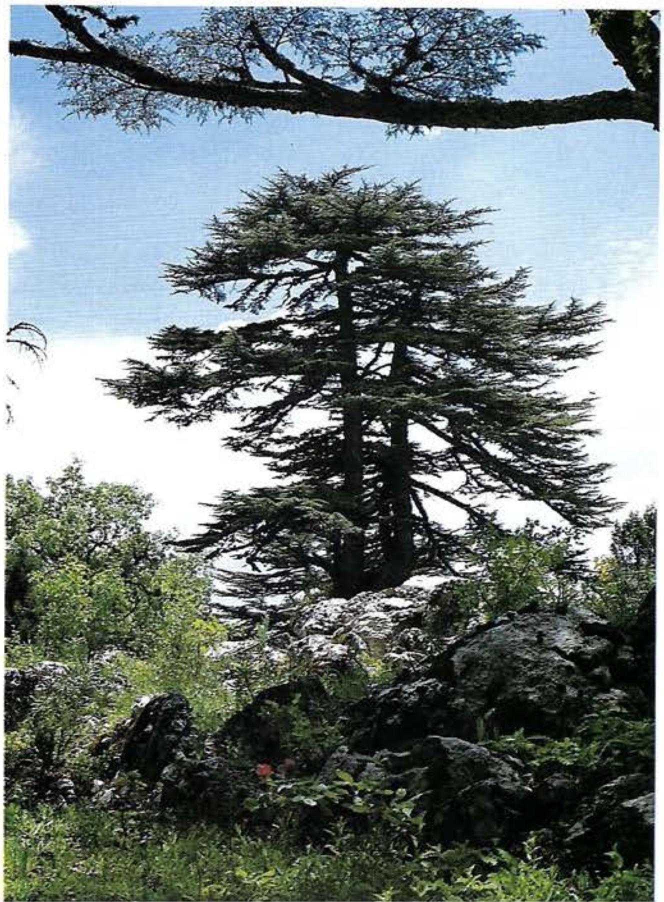
The Kasnak National Park is an area of natural mixed forest just below the tree line. At 1600 metres a diverse botanical treasure lies hidden amid its stands of graceful cedar, juniper, hornbeam, manna ash and five species of oak, including the eponymous Kasnak Oak *(Quercus vulcanica)*. In a sheltered dell ringed by protective fencing rises the granddaddy of them all: a

Right and above: the brilliant Paeonia mascula subsp. mascula, glowing in the forest. The plant is a long-lived perennial, but its flowers last only a week or two

magnificent 600-year-old specimen, 30 metres tall and still in its prime.

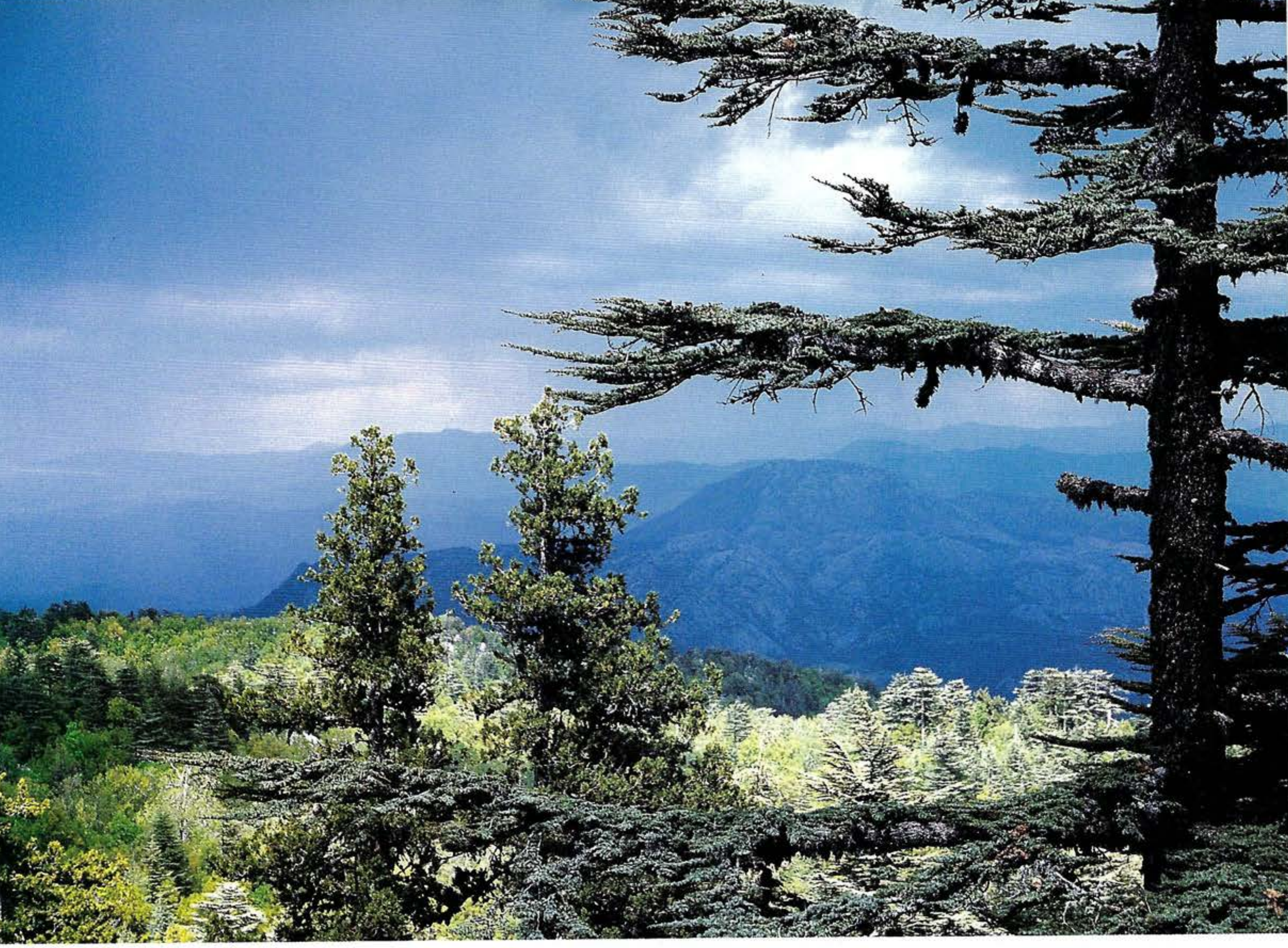
Yet it is not the towering tree that reduces us to stunned silence. As far as the eye can see, carpeting the woodland floor, are swathes of brilliant cerise peonies, their upturned goblets brimming with golden stamens. Sunlight flooding through the thin, early leaves gives a glow like stained glass to the delicate, translucent petals. Tight balls of velvety crimson buds await their moment to unfold. Here and there the glade is splashed with gold – tall, yellow leopardsbane *(Doronicum orientale)* and the curved sprays of golden pea. In shady nooks nod green and purple chequered fritillaries.

Our attention shifts to the resounding birdsong – chaffinch, great tit, Bonelli's warbler and the distant toots of a Kruper's nuthatch.

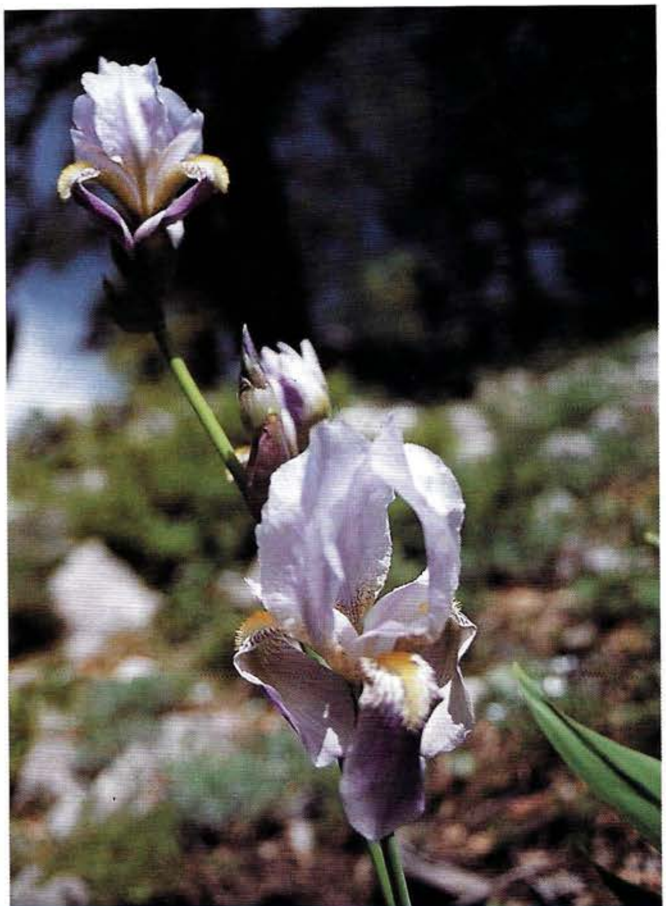


Feeding at the base of an oak is a handsome middle-spotted woodpecker. A sudden powerful drumming followed by the whir of an altogether larger pair of wings has our group in chase across the clearing. Revealed in classic pose on the side of a decaying oak is a magnificent male white-backed woodpecker. Elusive and scarce, these birds, previously unrecorded here, depend on such undisturbed mature forests.

As we climb, a single pure white pinewood orchid is followed by golden-yellow tulips. Higher still the sharp spikes of massed *Iris junonia* burst into bloom, in every shade from deep mauve and pink to creamy yellow. Masked shrikes and twittering serins call from the treetops as we marvel at the views. Forest-covered hills give way to barren peaks beyond, framed by elegant cedars. A



RINGING THE OAK GLADES OF THE KASNAK FOREST ARE MATURE STANDS OF JUNIPER AND A SILVERY-LEAFED SUBSPECIES OF CEDAR OF LEBANON, CEDRUS LIBANII SUBSP. STENOCOMA, WHICH TOWERS 40 METRES TALL AND IS FOUND ONLY IN SOUTHWEST TURKEY. OPPOSITE ABOVE: TULIPA SYLVESTRIS, SUBSP. AUSTRALIS, GROWS ON SUNNY ROCKY SLOPES. RIGHT: A LILAC IRIS JUNONIA

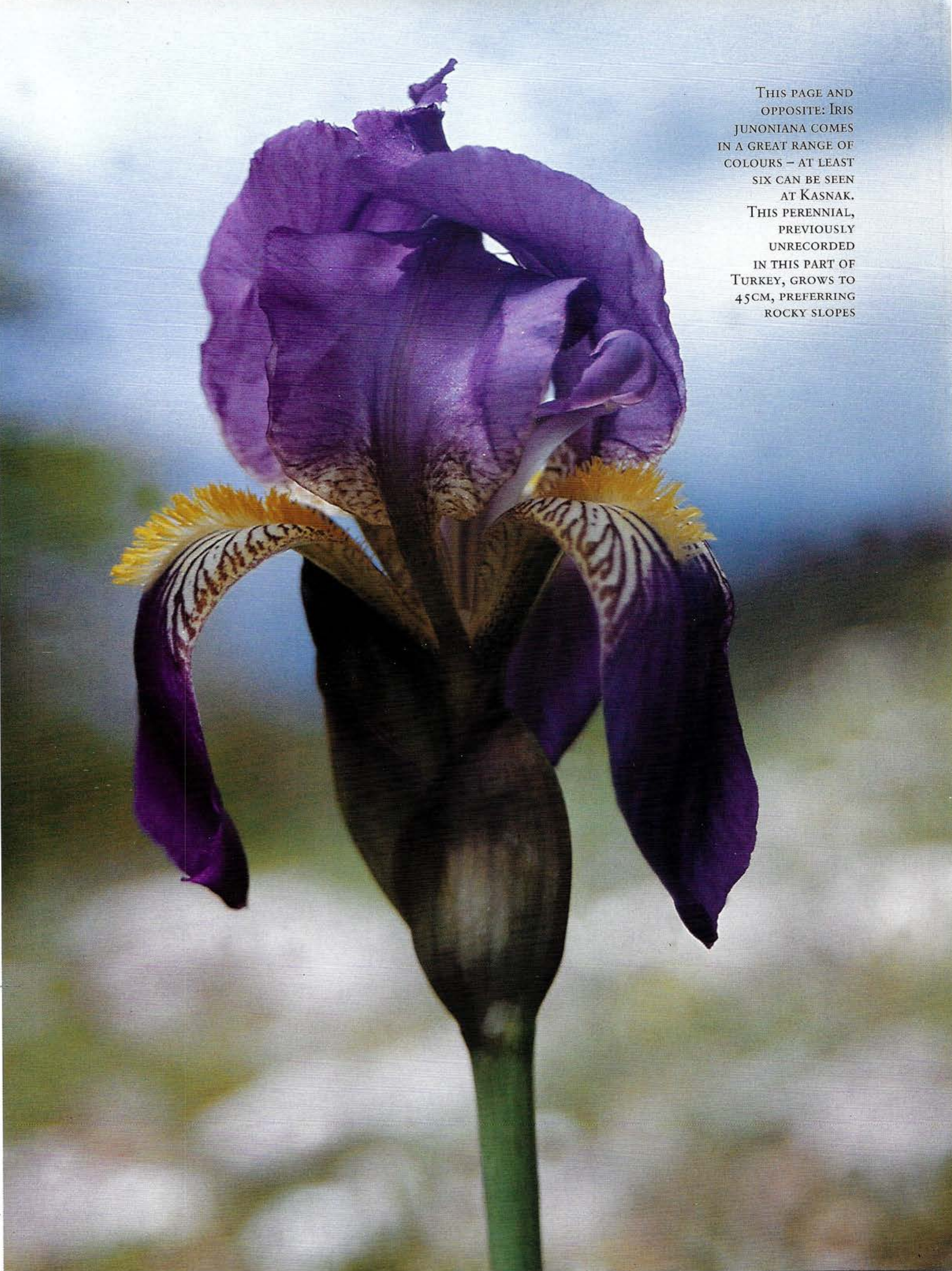


storm is building fast. Clouds roll over, thunder rumbles and lightning strikes. We retreat as massive drops rain down on the defenceless peonies.

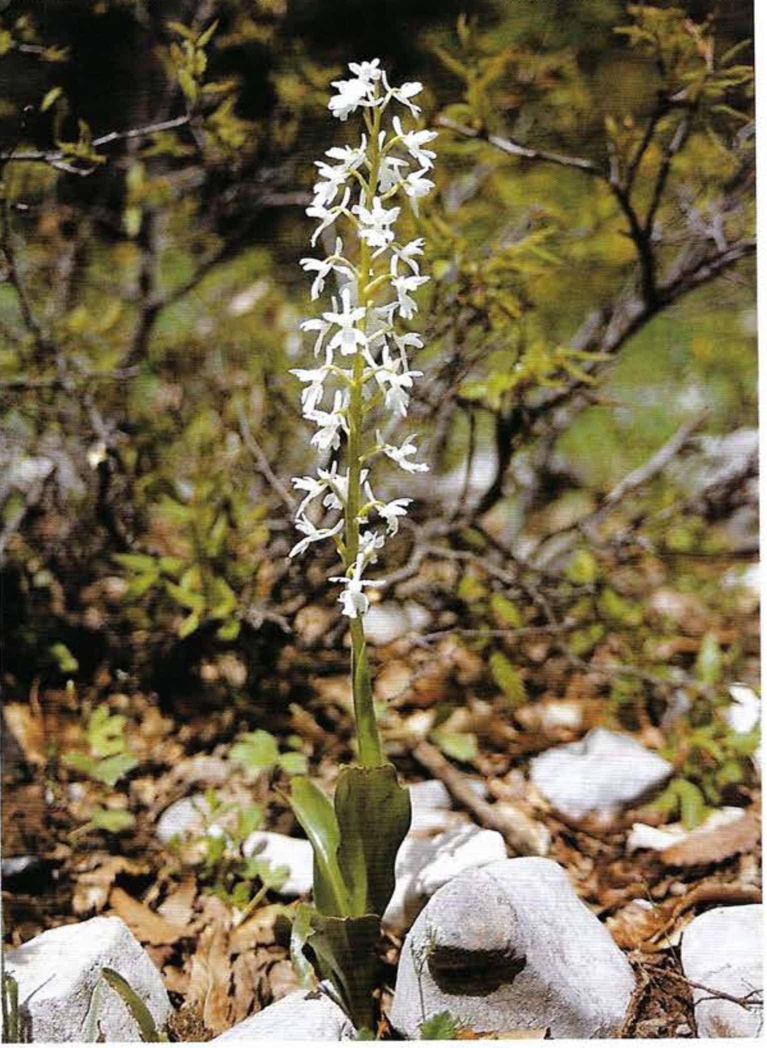
Back in the hotel lobby, a member of our group takes me aside. "Do you think we could get back a little earlier tomorrow? I do like time to read when I'm on holiday." "But the peonies..." I protest weakly. "Got masses in the garden at home, dear boy – irises too," he says dismissively. Not like these, I say to myself, and not in a place like this.

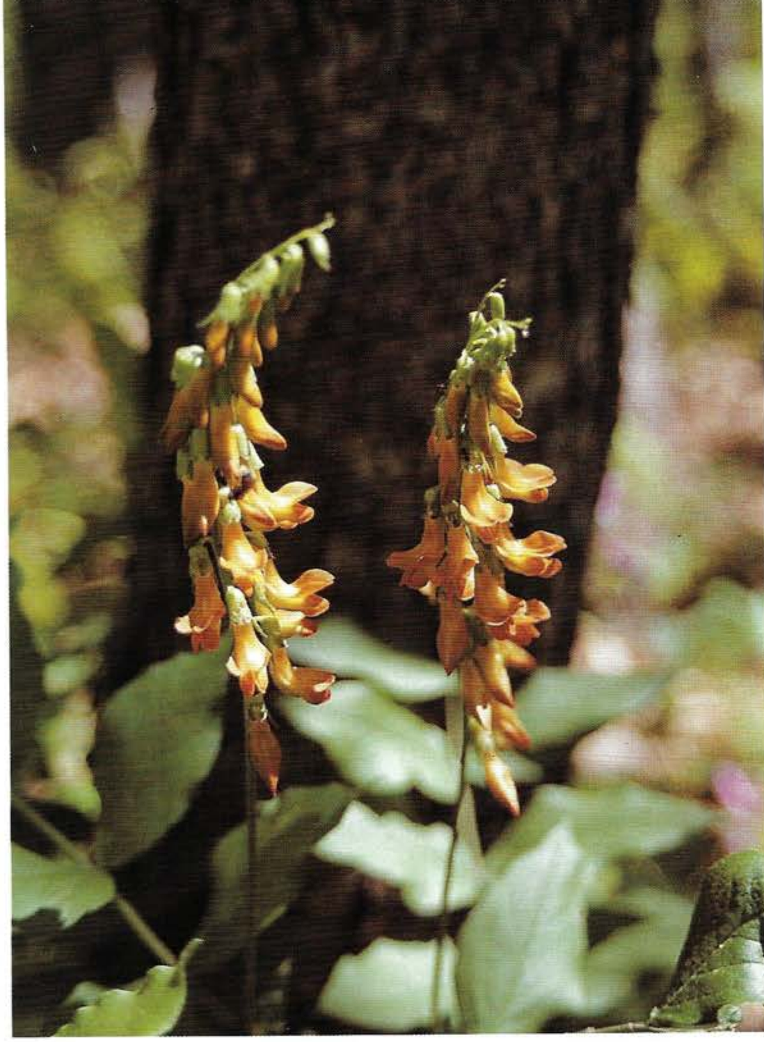
## TRAVEL NOTES

Kasnak Forest is south of Lake Eğirdir, 2½ hours' drive from Antalya Airport and 6 hours from Istanbul. From the town of Eğirdir, where there are hotels and pensions, take the Kovada road for 25km, and turn right into the village of Yukarı Gökdere. Follow the dirt road to the right of the new dam (where the track may be muddy but is passable by car) and carry on upwards for 8km, until you pass the signed and gated entrance to the park. The British company Greentours offers expert-led two-week botanical and birdwatching holidays in May, flying to Antalya and staying in Eğirdir. Tel +44(0)1298 83567, ian.green@greentours.co.uk.



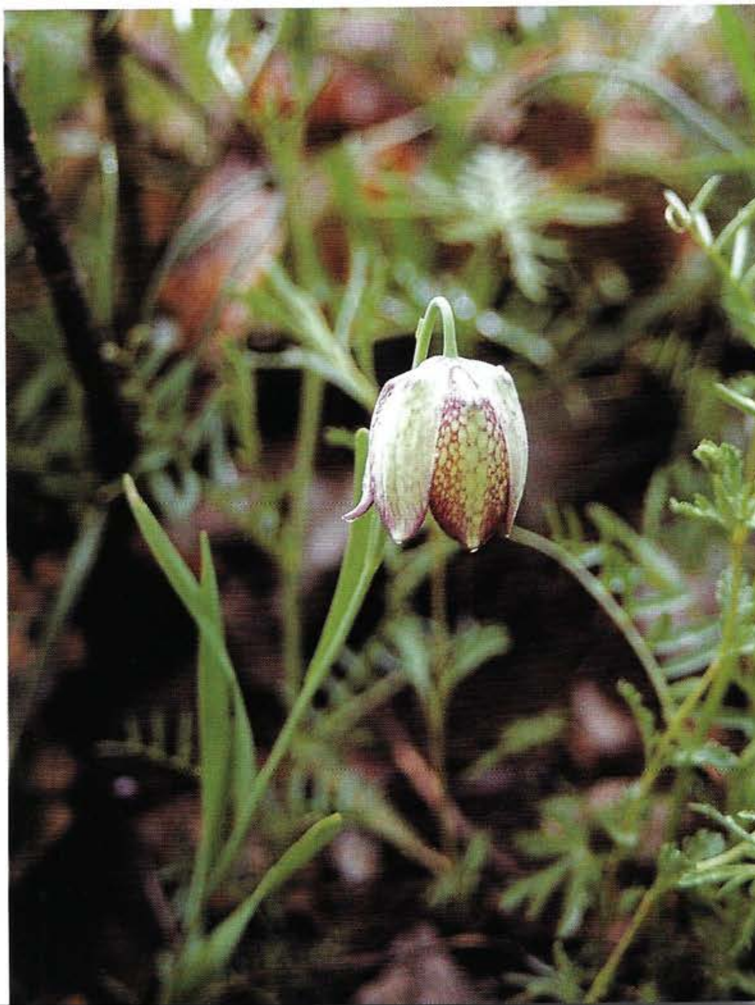
THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: IRIS JUNONIANA COMES IN A GREAT RANGE OF COLOURS – AT LEAST SIX CAN BE SEEN AT KASNAK. THIS PERENNIAL, PREVIOUSLY UNRECORDED IN THIS PART OF TURKEY, GROWS TO 45CM, PREFERRING ROCKY SLOPES





Jagged limestone peaks rise stark and white above the tree line. Top left: the forest gives up another secret, a rare white Orchis pinetorum. The magenta pink form, often seen at lower altitudes, is heavily collected for its tubers, used to make ice cream and the popular drink sahlep.

Top right: a handsome golden pea, Lathyrus aurea, which grows to 60cm, complements the peonies to wonderful effect.
Right: soft green Fritillaria whittallii, a common sight at Kasnak, is found only in the cedar forests and limestone scree of Turkey's southwest. The chequer pattern and colour can vary



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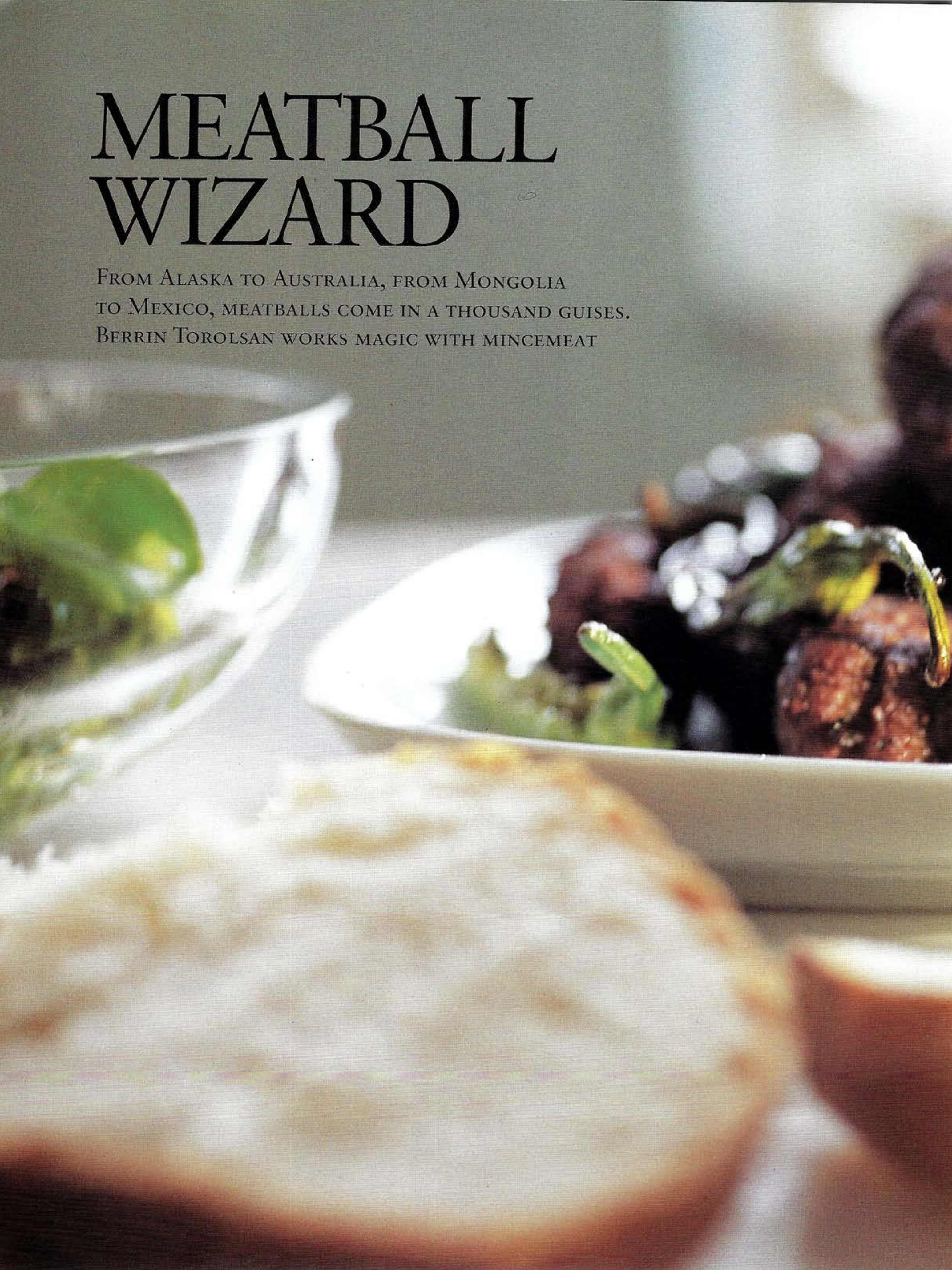

# MEATBALL WIZARD

From Alaska to Australia, from Mongolia to Mexico, meatballs come in a thousand guises. Berrin Torolsan works magic with mincemeat

Three *köftes* still stand out in my memory. Just thinking of them makes my taste buds ache. The first was in my early childhood: freshly grilled *cızbız köfte*, a round patty the size of a flattened walnut, so named because it makes a delicious "jiz-biz" sizzling sound as it cooks. There were two to a plate, with some salad or yoghurt and a slice of bread alongside. My mother remembers my insisting on eating the *köfte* first, then the bread by itself. She used to tease me about having Tatar blood in my veins – my paternal grandfather was from the Crimea.

My second unforgettable *köfte* was in my student days, when I travelled down with friends to the Aegean for holidays. The bus stopped at Tekirdağ, on the shore of the Marmara. Next to the quay was a restaurant legendary for its potato croquettes. *Patates köftesi* are usually little round balls, nice but often stodgy. These ones were oblong and fried a deep golden colour. They were unbelievably light and deliciously croquant. Sun and sea have faded in the memory, but not that taste. How often I looked for the restaurant afterwards, never finding it. I fear it has vanished.

The third of those memorable *köftes* was some twenty years ago. I was working with an archaeological team in the arid southeast of Turkey. One day I was taken to the nearby town of Adıyaman for lunch. The drive from the camp was through an almost abstract, empty landscape of rolling orange hills, utterly treeless under the bluest of blue skies. The town was medieval; so was its single restaurant, small, with a couple of tables spread with newspapers and wooden chairs. Along one wall was a charcoal brazier.

The only item on the menu was kebab and I was the only female in there; I was a bit uneasy as we ordered. The meat in Adıyaman in those days was invariably kid. Chopped to a fine mince studded with fat, it was skilfully kneaded and wrapped around a long flat skewer, with chunks of aubergine separating the two long patties. The skewers were left leaning against the brazier to cook. It didn't take long, and when they arrived, the waiter elegantly slid them off the skewer on to my plate with a fork. The taste of those *köfte* kebabs was quite simply out of this world. The meat was tender, with a deliciously chewy texture and no trace of fat, just a fragrant charred flavour, and the aubergines had turned into a creamy delight. I have never eaten anything like it again. Shy, and perhaps a little embarrassed by my urban squeamishness, I didn't have the nerve to talk to the chef and find out more. Foolish of me.

So what is a *köfte*? The word has many variants: in Morocco *kefta*, in Bulgaria *kyufte*, in Albania *qufte*, in Greece *kefthe* and in India *kofta*. The English tend to call it kofta, too. They all stem from the Persian *koofteh*, meaning pounded meat. Techniques, recipes and flavours may vary, but the main ingredient is usually minced meat. Sometimes lamb or beef is replaced by chicken, game or fish, or even pulses such as lentils, chickpeas or beans.

Before the invention of electric or even hand-powered mincing machines, meat was either pounded with pestles in special mortars, shaved with a razor-sharp blade, or chopped and minced with a large knife. The latter process is called *kıymak* in Turkish (the same verb is used for chopping herbs). So important was the skill considered that there used to be a special guild for the *kıymacılar*, or mince-makers, as distinct from the butchers. Hand-minced meat has the advantage that it is unbruised and therefore retains its moisture. Mincers, by definition, grind the meat and diminish the quality of the mince. Food processors are better because of their slicing action.

Mincing must be an ancient way of making use of the tough meat of newly slaughtered animals. Because the fibres are broken down, mince is an easily digested source of protein for young children, the elderly and anyone who lacks strong teeth. But it also goes off much more quickly than whole meat. A traditional way of preserving it is to fry it with salt in rendered fat. This *kuru kıyma*, or dry mince, can be stored for a long time, ready to be added to soups and stews whenever needed, to give flavour and substance. Like most Turkish women, I still keep some of this mince – which I cook in butter rather than rendered fat – in the fridge at all times. It can keep for a month.

Another way of preserving mince is to cure it by kneading salt and spices into it. The resulting mixture is squeezed into a clean casing of intestines to make sausages, which are then air-dried or smoked. At sausage-making time, it is still the custom in the countryside to grill little patties of the mixture for a quick tasting to check the seasoning, and to do the same with any filling left over after the casing is used up. The sausage meat recipe, *Sucuk Köftesi*, below probably derives from this custom.

Mince that is for immediate consumption is mixed with salt, spices, chopped onion and herbs and used for pasta dishes, as a pastry filling, and for stuffing various vegetables to make dolmas.

It can also become a meal in its own right, with a bolstering of starch in the form of rice, bulgur or breadcrumbs; the mixture is kneaded with spices to an elastic dough-like consistency, and is then shaped into meatballs of any size, from a chickpea to tennis ball. Meatballs are commonly added to stews in place of pieces of meat. Smaller ones go into soups, simmered with the accompanying ingredients, as in *Ekşili Köfte* below.

When they are to be fried, meatballs are rolled lightly between the palms and elongated to create a little more surface area, which allows the heat to penetrate to the centre. If they are to be grilled, they are flattened in the palm and patted into rounds. They may again vary in size, from a coin to a hamburger, but the logic is simple: the surface browns and forms a crust as the centre cooks in its own juices. Grilling over the embers of a charcoal fire is now a luxury (restaurants that use charcoal love to mention the fact), but in the past an open fire or hearth was the only heat available.

In Turkey every region has its own *köfte*. Many have colloquial names, but in Ottoman times they were all classified simply as *kebab*. Bursa's famous *İskender Kebab* is an old-fashioned chopped *köfte* charcoal-grilled on skewers, as was that unforgettable kebab in Adıyaman.

The first use of the word *köfte* in a cookery book that I have been able to find is in the famous Turabi Efendi's small volume of traditional Turkish

Crispy Köftes with spicy green peppers

recipes, which was written in English and appeared in 1862. He lists eleven recipes under the heading "Various Kyuftes".

There are other regional variations – a meatloaf that conceals whole hard-boiled eggs (similar to the French *Pâté de Pâques*, but without a pastry casing), and *İçli Köfte* (see below), crisply fried cone-shaped rissoles that reveal a treasure of nuts and raisins within. These are specialities of southeast Turkey. Another is *Çiğ Köfte*, the equivalent of steak tartare, in which raw mincemeat is kneaded so thoroughly with hot paprika, salt and parsley that it is effectively cured and is eaten uncooked. Variations on these southeastern dishes are found in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Israel.

In the hotpot of history, cultures, customs, trades and foodstuffs simmer gently together and different flavours evolve. So it is with the Persian *koofteh*. The Persians used to call underdone kebab "türkî"; the Turks refer to them as "tatarî". How do the Tatars order a rare steak, I wonder – *bleu à la française*?

Flavouring minced meat to make meatballs, rissoles and patties is an old practice the world over. Almost every nation from Mongolia to Mexico, from Alaska to Australia, has them in its culinary heritage. Although *köftes* are never regarded as haute cuisine, they have always been part of home cooking. But perhaps one day all the different names – including *köfte* – and all the varied tastes will have vanished, replaced by "hamburger" or simply "burger".

The recipes below are just a handful of the thousand and one varieties that still remain.

**NOTE ON MINCED MEAT:**
If you want to buy mince, always ask your butcher to prepare it from a whole cut of meat. Ideally, make your own in a food processor from chops or steaks suitable for grilling. It will have a delicious chewy texture. Remove any bones and tough bits, but leave on the fat so that the meat does not become too dry. Chop it roughly into cubes with a sharp knife. Use the pulse switch of the food processor in short bursts; process the meat for a few seconds only, taking care not to purée it.

### Cizbiz Köfte
### Sizzling Köftes

*400g minced meat (preferably lamb)*
*1 slice stale bread (soaked and squeezed dry)*
*1 egg*
*1 teaspoon wine vinegar*
*Salt*
*1 teaspoon pepper (freshly ground)*
*1 teaspoon powdered cumin*
*2–3 tomatoes (halved crosswise)*
*Olive oil for brushing the köftes*

This *köfte* gets its name from the sizzling sound that the melting fat from the meat makes when it drips onto hot embers. It is so straightforward you cannot go wrong. But for something special, make the meat of extra-good quality and not too lean.

**1** Place the minced meat in a bowl. Discarding the crust, crumble the bread into the bowl, adding the egg. Season with the vinegar, salt, pepper and cumin. Knead with your hands until all the ingredients are blended into a soft dough.

**2** Roll a small piece between your palms into a ball the size of a walnut, and lightly flatten. Repeat until all the meat is used up. Cover and store in the fridge until needed.

**3** Before cooking, set the grill to very hot (if you have a barbecue, wait until the flames have died down and all the embers are glowing).

**4** Brush the *köftes* with olive oil, sprinkle the tomatoes with a pinch of salt and grill them together for 2 minutes on either side.

### Kuru Köfte
### Crispy Köftes

*500g minced meat*
*2 slices stale bread (soaked and squeezed dry)*
*1 medium onion (grated)*
*1 egg*
*Parsley and dill (finely chopped)*
*Salt and pepper*
*Powdered cumin*
*Oil for frying*

Freshly fried and served with spicy long green peppers or quartered bell peppers, also fried, these *köftes* are delicious and traditionally enjoyed by everyone from one to a hundred. Hot, they make appetising finger food for parties. Cold, they are excellent for travelling and for picnics.

**1** Knead all the ingredients with your hands until the mixture holds together.

**2** Wetting your hands, take pieces of the mixture the size of a walnut, roll them between your palms, and form them into slightly elongated meatballs.

**3** Fry all over. Serve warm or cold with lots of green salad and fresh bread.

### Sahanda Köfte
### Simmered Köftes

*500g minced meat*
*2 slices stale bread (soaked and squeezed dry)*
*Parsley (finely chopped)*
*Salt and freshly ground black pepper*
*3–4 potatoes (peeled and cut into rounds)*
*3 tomatoes (cut into rounds)*
*1 bell pepper (deseeded and sliced)*
*1/2 tablespoon tomato paste*
*Butter*

These *köftes* are usually cooked on the stove, simmered in a covered saucepan or skillet, but they can also be baked in the oven in an oiled baking dish.

**1** Mix the mince with the bread, parsley, salt and pepper. Roll small pieces of the mixture in your palms and flatten into round patties. Arrange these upright in a circle around the inside of a shallow pan, alternating the meat with slices of tomato and potato. Arrange a second circle in the centre, and another if there is room to spare, and lay the pepper slices on top.

**2** Dot the top with butter and sprinkle with a little extra salt.

**3** Dilute the tomato paste in half a glass of hot water and add to the pan. Simmer gently over a moderate heat until the potatoes are cooked.

**4** Serve hot straight from the pan.

### Kadin Budu Köfte
### Lady's Thighs

*500g minced meat*
*2 cups parsley (finely chopped)*
*1 cup cooked rice or leftovers of pilav*
*4 eggs*
*Salt*
*1 dessertspoon pepper (freshly ground)*
*1 dessertspoon powdered cinnamon*
*Oil for frying*

Who knows how this *köfte* got such a voluptuous name? It is very easy to prepare and even easier if you have some leftover rice pilav. Otherwise quickly cook half a cup of rice in a cup of salted cold water until the grains are soft and have absorbed all the water. There are more complicated ways to prepare this dish, but this is the most practical – one doesn't even get one's hands greasy.

**1** In a large bowl, mix the meat, parsley, cooked rice, 2 eggs, salt, pepper and cinnamon until they are all evenly blended.

**2** Beat the 2 remaining eggs lightly with a fork and pour over the meat mixture, without stirring.

**3** Heat the oil in a large frying pan. Use two tablespoons, one in each hand, to shape the mixture into meatballs – there is no need to be too precise – sliding them into the pan as you go along. Fry until crisp on both sides.

**4** Serve hot or cold with plenty of salad or natural yoghurt.

### Içli Köfte
### Nut-Filled Rissoles

*For the filling:*
*1 tablespoon butter*
*2 tablespoons pine kernels*
*1 medium onion (finely chopped)*
*250g minced lamb*
*2 tablespoons redcurrants*
*For the wrapping:*
*250g fine bulgur (rinsed)*
*1 teaspoon paprika flakes*
*Salt and black pepper*
*250g minced beef*
*1 egg*
*Oil for frying*

The lamb used for the filling should preferably be from a shoulder, which, being fatty, will keep the filling rich and moist. The beef used for the wrapping should be lean so that it holds together.

**1** To prepare the filling, heat the butter in a heavy pan and fry the pine kernels, stirring quickly until they are golden. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the lamb and redcurrants and continue sautéing for a further 5 minutes until most of the juice from the meat has evaporated. Season and set aside to cool.

**2** To make the wrapping, first rinse the bulgur and add the paprika flakes, salt and pepper, together with a glass of warm water. Mix well and knead until the bulgur softens and the grains start to stick together. If the mixture is still too dry and crumbles, moisten it by wetting your hands. Now add the beef and the raw egg and knead the mixture until it is the consistency of dough.

**3** Take an egg-sized piece of the mixture and flatten it as thinly as possible in the palm of your hand to serve as a wrapping. Place a tablespoon of the lamb filling in the middle, closing the sides over the filling. Pinch the ends to give the *köfte* a lemon shape. Repeat until the mixture is used up.

**4** Deep-fry the rissoles in hot oil for a crunchy crust. Serve hot or cold.

### Sucuk Köftesi
### Spicy Garlic Köftes

*500g minced meat*
*1 slice of stale bread (soaked and squeezed dry)*
*1 onion (grated)*
*3 garlic cloves (pounded)*
*Salt, pepper and powdered cumin*
*1 dessertspoon paprika flakes*
*Flour*
*1 tablespoon butter*
*2 tablespoons tomato paste*

These *köftes* are made with the same garlicky meat mixture that is used as a filling for *sucuk* sausages. The garlic can be adjusted according to taste. The *köftes* are simmered in a tomato sauce, as below, or can be grilled or fried without the sauce.

**1** Mix all the ingredients except the flour, butter and tomato paste, and knead to a soft dough.

**2** Between your palms, roll egg-sized pieces of the mixture into oblong shapes. Dust them with flour.

**3** Melt the butter in a large shallow pan, sear the *köftes* on both sides, just to brown the surface.

**4** Dilute the tomato paste in a glass of hot water, pour over the meat and simmer, covered, on a very low heat for 15 minutes, until the sauce has thickened a little.

**5** Serve hot on toasted bread, with the tomato sauce spooned over.

### Ekşili Köfte
### Tangy Meatballs

*2 medium potatoes*
*1 large carrot*
*1 small celeriac*
*250g minced meat*
*1 tablespoon rice (rinsed)*
*Salt and freshly ground pepper*
*1–2 tablespoons butter*
*Terbiye Sauce:*
*2 eggs*
*Juice of 1 lemon*
*Flat-leaf parsley to garnish*

This tangy dish is appetising as a soup or main course. Even as a main course it is traditionally served with plenty of sauce. For soup, you simply add more water and make the meatballs smaller. The lemon *terbiye* sauce is added just before serving as it curdles if overheated or reheated.

**1** Half-fill a large soup pan with water. Add salt and bring to the boil.

**2** While heating the water, peel the potatoes, scrape the carrot, peel the celeriac, and dice them all evenly on a board. Bring the water to a rolling boil and add the vegetables. Reduce the heat.

**3** Mix the meat with the rice, season with salt and pepper and shape the mixture with your hands into small balls the size of a walnut (smaller for soup). Drop them into the pan of simmering vegetables.

**4** Add the butter to the pan, using a little extra if the meat is very lean, and simmer until the rice grains are soft and protruding from the meatballs. By that time the vegetables will also be cooked.

**5** To make the sauce, break two eggs into a bowl. Sprinkle with salt, which helps to stabilise them, and whisk with a fork. Add the lemon juice and continue mixing until thoroughly combined. Whisk a spoonful of the hot liquid into the lemon and egg mixture. Repeat this 3 or 4 times, a spoonful at a time, until the sauce has warmed without curdling.

**6** Pour the sauce over the meatballs and vegetables and return to a gentle heat. Reheat, stirring, until the sauce thickens, taking care not to let it boil.

**7** Serve garnished with fresh parsley.

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## Sikma Köfte
## Meatballs with Half-Moon Onions

*500g minced meat*
*1 cup rice (rinsed)*
*Salt and pepper*
*3 medium onions*
*1 tablespoon butter*
*2 tomatoes (peeled and chopped) or 2 tablespoons tomato paste*

In this rustic recipe the meatballs don't have to be tapered, rolled or otherwise moulded into shape, which makes it easy for those with little time to spend in the kitchen.

**1** In a mixing bowl, add the rice, salt and pepper to the minced meat and set aside.

**2** Peel the onions, halve them lengthwise and slice on a board into half-moons.

**3** Heat the butter in a shallow pan, stir in the onion and fry until translucent. Add the fresh tomatoes or tomato paste, and sauté a little longer. Season with salt, add a glass of hot water and leave to simmer, covered, on a minimum heat.

**4** While the vegetables are simmering, briefly knead the meat mixture until it is well blended. Take a walnut-sized portion in your palm, squeeze it firmly to compress and drop into the simmering pan. Repeat with the rest of the mixture. Cover and cook for about 20 minutes, until the rice grains are soft and sticking out of the meatballs.

**5** Serve hot with bread to mop up the delicious onion and tomato sauce.

## Rulo Köfte
## Meatloaf with Eggs

*4 eggs*
*2–3 small carrots*
*2 slices of stale bread (soaked and squeezed dry)*
*500g minced meat*
*1 medium onion (grated)*
*2 teaspoons powdered cumin*
*1/2 tablespoon wine vinegar*
*2 teaspoons freshly ground pepper*
*Salt*
*1 cup parsley (chopped)*
*1 tablespoon olive oil*

Meatloaf is "a dish whose visibility is considerably higher in real life than in cookery books", Alan Davidson writes in the *Oxford Companion to Food*. "The situation might be changed if it had a French name...but it does not." This recipe makes a refined, succulent, mildly spicy meatloaf.

**1** Boil 3 eggs with the carrots for 10 minutes. Shell the eggs, drain the carrots and set aside.

**2** Place the soaked bread in a mixing bowl. Break the fourth egg into the bowl and add all the ingredients except the hard-boiled eggs, carrots and olive oil. Knead the mixture until it holds when shaped into a ball.

**3** Transfer to a buttered roasting tray and flatten with your palms to a rectangle. Place the shelled eggs in the centre end to end and the carrots next to them. Fold the meat over the eggs and carrots, and press together to seal into a loaf shape.

**4** Brush the surface with olive oil and roast in a hot oven for 20 minutes. Serve sliced like a cake, hot or cold. Potatoes make a good accompaniment.

## Balik Köftesi
## Fish Croquettes

*500g fish*
*1 bay leaf*
*1 tablespoon flour*
*1 onion (grated)*
*1 beaten egg*
*1/2 cup mixed herbs (finely chopped parsley, mint and dill)*
*1 teaspoon lemon zest*
*Salt and freshly ground pepper*
*Olive oil for frying*

Any large fish can be used, but best of all are fish steaks or fillets with few bones.

**1** Clean the fish and poach briefly with a bay leaf in salted water until flaky.

**2** Drain, bone, and flake into a deep bowl. Add the flour, onion, egg, herbs, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Mix well.

**3** Take small pieces of the mixture and shape with your hands into flat croquettes.

**4** Coat with flour and fry gently in hot olive oil until golden. Drain on a paper napkin and serve hot or cold, with fresh parsley and lemon wedges.

## Patates Köftesi
## Crunchy Potato Croquettes

*4–5 potatoes (peeled and quartered)*
*1 slice stale bread (soaked in milk and squeezed dry) (optional)*
*3 eggs*
*Salt and pepper*
*2 tablespoons cornflour for dusting*
*Breadcrumbs*
*Oil for frying*

*For a cheese filling:*
*White or feta cheese (crumbled)*
*Parsley (finely chopped)*

*For a meat filling:*
*150g minced meat*
*Onion (chopped)*
*Salt and pepper*

For these delicious filled croquettes, waxy potatoes are best. They have a higher starch content than floury varieties and will make the croquettes hold together better when they are fried. If you have no choice, stale bread soaked in milk then squeezed dry, crumbled and mixed with the mashed potatoes, will do the binding. With a cheese filling they make a delicious starter. The meat filling makes them into a meal: fry the minced meat and onion in a little butter until all the moisture has evaporated, sprinkle with salt and pepper and set aside.

**1** Boil the potatoes with a pinch of salt till the centres are soft when pierced with a sharp knife. Drain and mash to a purée.

**2** Beat 2 eggs in a bowl, stir in the potato purée (and crumbled bread if used), season and blend well to the consistency of a soft dough.

**3** Oil your hands a little, take an egg-sized piece of the potato mixture and form it into a boat shape with your hands. Spoon a little of the cheese or meat filling into the centre. Close the sides over the filling and seal by gently rolling and tapering. Place on a flour-dusted surface. Repeat until all the mixture is used up.

**4** Sprinkle with flour, cover and keep in the fridge until needed.

**5** To cook, beat the remaining egg lightly with a fork. Roll the croquettes first in the beaten egg, then in the breadcrumbs, and fry in hot oil until crisp and golden.

**6** Transfer to a paper napkin and serve without delay while still crunchy. ◆

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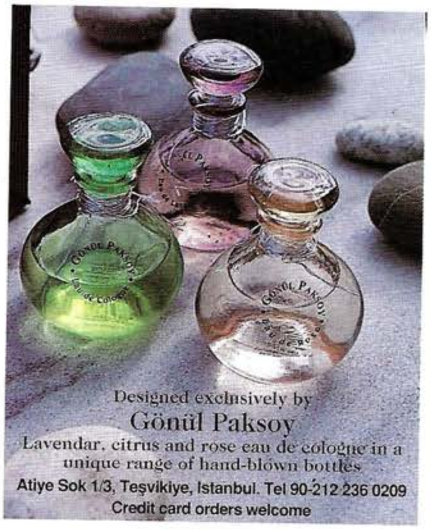

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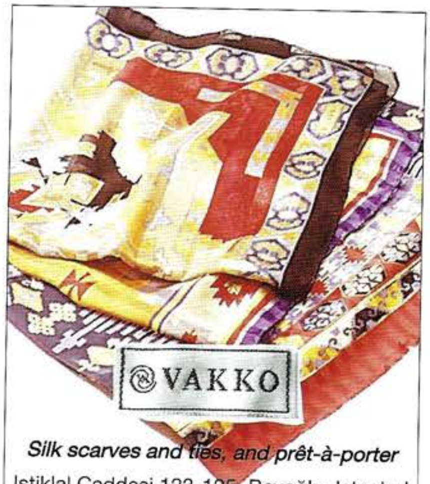

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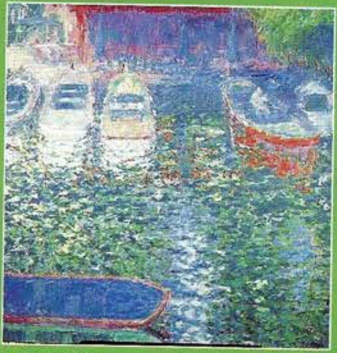

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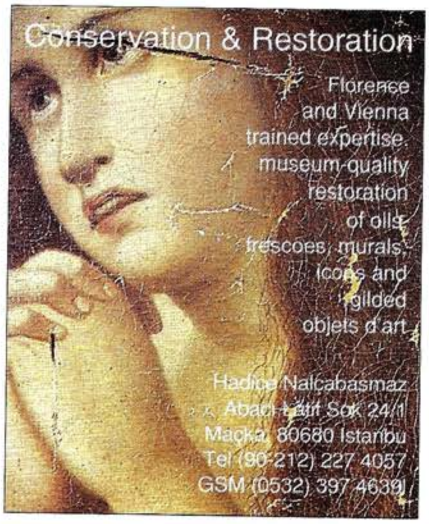

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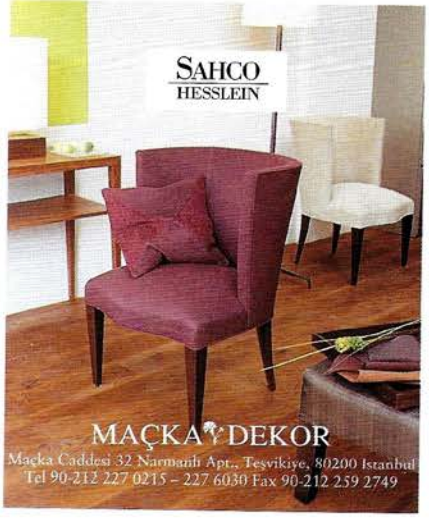

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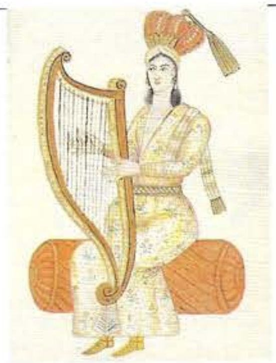

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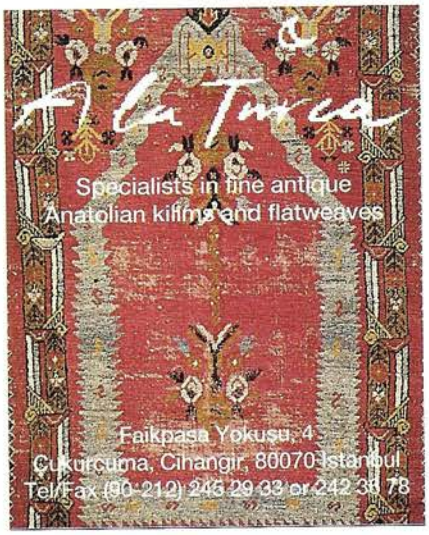

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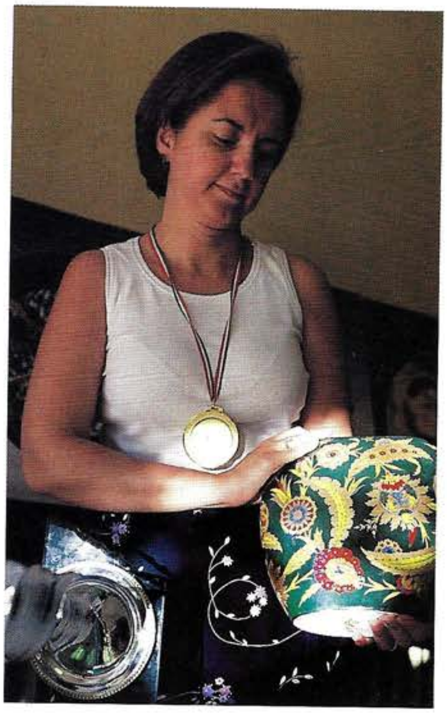
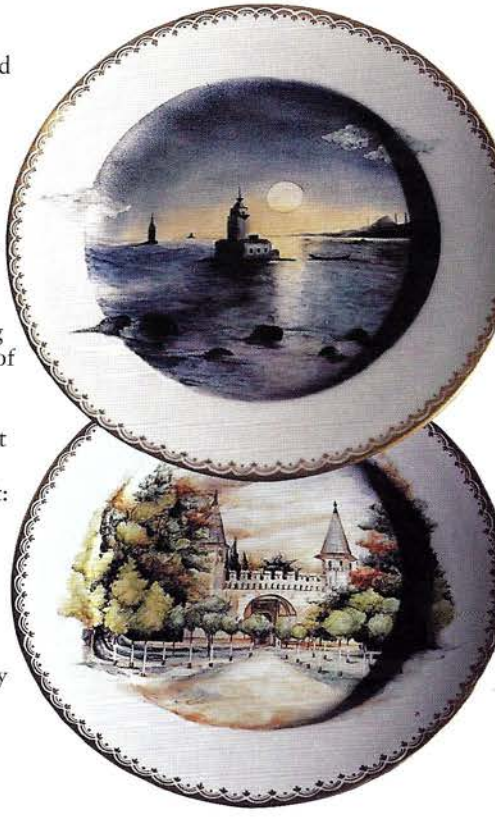


ELIZABETH MEATH BAKER PAYS A VISIT TO AN AWARD-WINNING PORCELAIN STUDIO IN ISTANBUL

# PRIZES ON A PLATE



You might not think that a couple of terms spent in a television factory would help in a career as a fine porcelain painter, but Gül Arık is sure that this part of her training at Istanbul's Fine Arts University has stood her in good stead. "It was very technical, and I am an artist, but it was very useful in understanding the mentality of design."

After leaving the university, Gül spent three years at İstanbul Porselen, then a huge industrial producer. Having progressed from decorator to manager of a department of sixty, she became frustrated with the company's lack of enterprise and innovation, and left to set up her own business. Five years or so after her departure she was proved right: the factory closed.

Gül runs Elma (apple), the small studio she set up in Fenerbahçe, with an old schoolfriend, Uğur Olgaç. They have chosen a feminine, domestic direction for their work, which, though made for daily use, has a delicate, slightly rarefied quality. Specialising in on-glaze decoration of porcelain and ceramics, both women carry out their own work there, making pieces for sale in the shop attached to their studio. They also hold porcelain painting classes open to all.

In their private work as artists, they concentrate on pieces for international competitions, which culminated this year in Gül's plate "Turkish Inspiration" taking first prize, in a field of 1,140 entries, at the Associazione Italiana Decoratori e Insegnanti di Pittura su Porcellana competition at Como. The Elma studio also won the team award, including a special mention for a vase by Ilknur Özören inspired by Ottoman kaftan motifs.

The great strength of the studio is its mastery of technique: pieces from any era or place can be recreated, whether it is in the rather florid late nineteenth-century American style, with lots of *dégradé* pastels, or reproduces the delicate rococo brushstrokes of Meissen and Limoges.

As a teenager, Gül was a keen watercolourist. On porcelain, her delicate painting skill is evident in her illustrations of landscapes, birds and flowers in various antique styles.

The studio starts with white glazed porcelain blanks, chosen from a variety of

TURKISH DELICACIES. OPPOSITE, LEFT TO RIGHT: PAINTING THE INTRICATE PATTERN ON A COFFEE CUP; ILKNUR ÖZÖREN AND THE VASE THAT WON A SPECIAL MENTION AT COMO; CUPS AND LATTICEWORK DISHES. OPPOSITE BELOW: HISTORICALLY INSPIRED PLATES OF ISTANBUL SCENES. ABOVE: REPLICAS OF MEISSEN CUPS, IDENTICAL TO THE ORIGINAL IN ALL BUT AGE. LEFT: GÜL ARIK, FOUNDER OF THE ELMA STUDIO AND WINNER OF THE GOLD MEDAL AT COMO

manufacturers whose shapes they find pleasing. The design is painted on before firing at 800°C; some pieces require several stages of firing as layers of colour and gold or silver are added. People come to Gül with old broken pieces and ask her to produce replicas; this she will do for an antique or period piece, although never for something modern. First she must find a suitable blank – an approximation of the original sometimes has to do. Fortunately many of the old porcelain firms in France, Germany or Italy are still manufacturing some of their antique shapes. Equally, old pieces of painted porcelain provide inspiration and a continuing education.

Gül feels there are no secrets to her craft. In terms of materials, there is next to no difference between a coffee cup made in the eighteenth century and one made today. Part of the point of taking part in conventions and competitions is to share knowledge, learn new techniques and improve skills. If techniques are kept secret, vital knowledge can be lost, as happened with the notorious Iznik tomato red. Gül focuses strongly on sharing her knowledge with students, rather than channelling her energies into business and sales, which makes what she actually produces the more perfect, and the more exclusive. Catch it if you can. ◆

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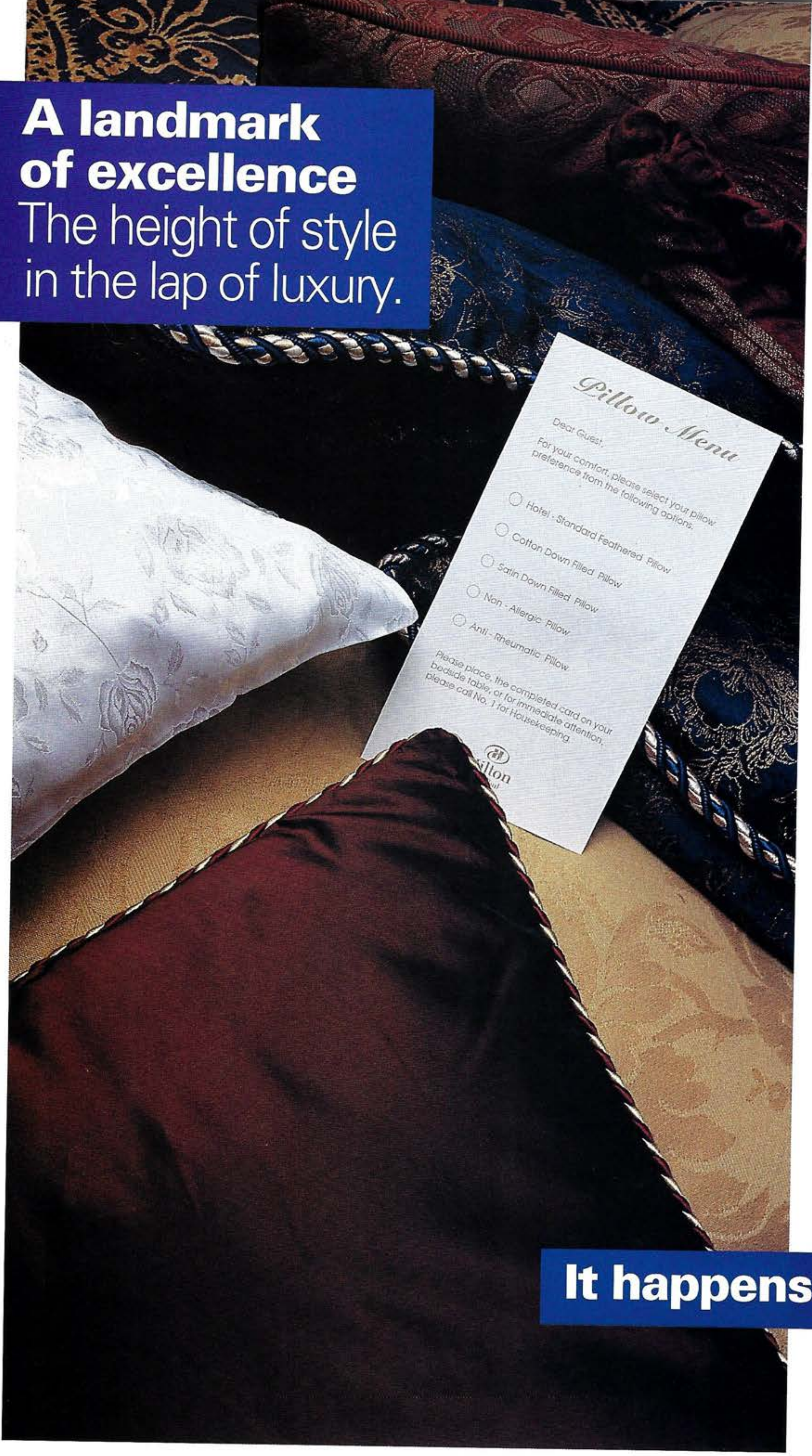**A landmark of excellence**
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# VILLAGE VOICES

Azize Ethem continues her journals from her new home near Iznik, where she cooks quinces by the ton, enjoys all the fun of the fair at Naturel 2000, immerses herself in Nicaen history, marvels at the magic of market day and finds she's the fishermen's catch

## Moving heaven and earth

With all the toing and froing over the past few months it is only now, as winter approaches, that I can sit down and take stock. The builders are still with us, racing to beat the coming rains. Riza's father and uncle have joined in the garden work as here, too, we race to be ready for cold weather.

Hundreds of cases of quinces are stored in the cool room at the end of Selim's workshop and the kitchen is filled with the wonderful scent of poaching, boiling, baking and pickling quinces.

We have built a plastic monstrosity along the lines of a drunken miniature Sydney Opera House to keep our seedlings warm.

The leaves on the poplars rattle as I walk down to the duck pen. I always thought "the rattle of leaves" was painted prose, but they do really rattle. Süleyman has built me a tiny balcony upstairs, like a sentry's lookout tower. I sit up there in the soft afternoon sunlight and look over the bulrushes to the lake and the hills beyond. I can see villages on the opposite shore waiting to be visited and explored.

We wait to see if the lake rises to flood our meadow, like last winter. Locals tell us it comes up every year; others say it rises in ten-year cycles; another group insist it is only every thirty years that it comes that high.

Beyond our gate, tractors pass in convoy from dawn to dusk, carrying the olive crop to the processing plant. In the town, stacks of wood for winter fires lean against the houses. The market stalls are heaped with fleecy underwear. Meanwhile we enjoy the fading warmth of autumn.

## All the fun of the fair

It is quite a treat for a country bumpkin to be asked to man the Cornucopia stand at an Istanbul fair and, having been trusted to do it several times before, I went along knowing just what to expect. The venue was the Istanbul Sergi Sarayı at Tepebaşı, a cavernous building akin to an aircraft hanger. Held in late October, the festival was being organised by a new company in the Turkish event organisers' ranks so I was primed and ready to fight and snarl to get things arranged the way I saw fit. The word "Naturel" in large letters on the brochure added to my feeling that it was all going to be a tiny bit amateurish.

How wrong can one be? I should have had an inkling when, before I even reached the door, a security guard not only smiled, but helped me carry my packages. How the organisers managed it, I can't begin to fathom, but somehow the layout of the stands had eliminated all the dead corners. No stands stuck down a back alley or behind a post – for once there were no dead ends or pillars, and the feeling a 747 would suddenly appear was completely absent. At Naturel 2000, a lot of time and thought had gone into the layout, and it showed. There were over 70 displays, two conference salons a workshop and a stage area.

The stalls covered the whole spectrum of the new-age, alternative-lifestyle philosophy. There were organic food stands, Eastern meditation, environmental groups, and a wonderful gallery of photography. The vitamin-supplement people were there, as well as all the alternative-medicine groups. A very interesting company from a village near Selçuk had a display of their organic wines, which are sold in Europe. There was a sprinkling of stands dedicated to the various yoga disciplines and a variety of therapies were represented. Downstairs there were two beautiful stands displaying Turkish silk, and the Istanbul Quilters Association had a spectacular array of patchwork melding traditional Turkish patterns with European and American designs. I could have spent at least two days just looking and learning. As well as all this, the two conference centres hosted speakers on a sweeping array of topics. On the first day alone there were fourteen lectures, three workshops and different groups using the stage area.

The atmosphere of the festival was like no other fair I have been to in Istanbul. There were no raised voices, perhaps due to the management's superb organisation, or maybe because the stallholders were busy from dawn to dusk. The crowds were continuous, and interested members of the public cheerfully sat on the floor when the lecture halls were filled to bursting.

There were one or two inscrutable-looking gentlemen in saffron robes and a few women of a certain age wearing strange garments, but none of the bearded angry young men I had expected – not one of those peculiar people one bumped into in the seventies selling soap made out of lawn clippings or suchlike.

As luck would have it, I was in the very best place for a person who just happened to have a few tons of organic quinces to spare, and I now have orders for all my quince products.

Leyla Browne is the Managing Director of Festiva, the new company which organised Naturel 2000. She, with the support of her partners, has used her years of experience in the exhibition business to organise the first event of this kind in Turkey. I only hope they are planning a Naturel 2001.

## Iznik Nicaea Symposium

Hot on the heels of my trip to Istanbul was this four-day symposium back home in Iznik. Organised by the Iznik Foundation, it was sponsored by the Türkiye İş Bankası. The Iznik Foundation is the brainchild of Işıl and Akın Akbaygil, who are training local artists to produce Iznik tiles using the methods and materials of 400 years ago.

We arrived with Emin Saatçı, to be confronted by the two biggest marquees I've ever seen – one with seating for 500, the other a dining hall, every bit as luxurious as a five-star hotel. Not being half as sophisticated as I pretend to be, I was thrilled to be given a pair of earphones which magically turned Turkish or French into English.

Over the next four days we listened and learnt as over forty speakers took us through every aspect of the history of

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Iznik. It was all very heady for someone whose knowledge of the city of Nicaea or Iznik tiles could be written on a postage stamp. Halil Inalcik the respected historian from Bilkent University started the ball rolling with a talk on the Ottoman conquest of Iznik, and Ara Altın spoke on Iznik's architectural heritage. Clive Foss gave us a wonderful walk through history as he explained the history of each part of the Byzantine walls of the city. I even managed to get to the lecture tent by 9am on the fourth day to attend Heath Lowry's talk: *Ottoman Iznik Through the Eyes of Travellers*. My only complaint was that I could have listened to him for another couple of hours. Now a backwater, the ancient city of Nicaea was once on the main trade route between east and west and the story of this town could fill ten tomes.

The Turkish dignitaries were all recognised by the police, who were organising the traffic, and my kudos leapt five notches when they made a fuss of me. I didn't let on that, rather than being recognised as a VIP, I was known as the wife of the man with the magnificent motorbike. Fame comes in many guises.

It was four days of intensive concentration. I have vowed to do a lot of homework before the next symposium in 2002.

## Market forces

One has to dress up for market day. It is the social event of the week. Cars, pick-up trucks and tractors clog the streets. It's the tractors you have to watch – the younger men drive them as if they were James Bond behind the wheel of his Aston Martin. It is a market-day phenomenon that pedestrians use the road as a footpath. Ancients wander along the centre white line, oblivious to the hooting of horns. Groups of women standing in the path of traffic catch up on gossip. Small children on bicycles weave through the crowds and vehicles. The teahouse patrons spill out onto the street verges, on chairs I imagine are kept stacked in some special market-day depot.

The deeper you venture into the streets and lanes of stalls, the more maze-like it becomes. There is a complete street of fabrics, which magically moves itself each week. Left, second right, left again – and it's not there. Mind you, I find all sorts of interesting stalls when I am lost. Probably never to be found again.

One of the many nice things about living in a Turkish country town is how quickly one feels part of the community. There are several shops we cannot pass without being offered tea. Restaurant staff remember I that cannot eat green pepper and immediately point out the *bibersiz* dishes.

Last week I was looking for linguine at the pasta stall. Today, walking along narrow lane, I saw Mr Pasta waving a packet of linguine above his head as I approached. How much profit is there in such a transaction and how much trouble had he gone to?

The staff of the fishing-tackle shop always stop me to ask how big was the one that got away. We discuss the merits of various bait and I leave all my bags of purchases outside their door while I make another foray into the depths of the maze.

There is the most wonderful old-fashioned herb shop with strange potions, things looking like lizard skins in jars, and sacks of dried flower heads. There is a spectacle stall with exactly the same glasses as one of the large London chains at a third of the London prices.

Looking for a cow bell, a wedding dress, fruit, veggies, ducklings, second-grade broken biscuits or an elastic thingie for your hernia? It's all here at the Wednesday market.

## Pilgrims' progress

Riza, his father Hamit and I spent the day unclogging the stream. Old tins and fishing nets and other treasures had lain undisturbed for years, and two hundred metres of overgrown bulrushes had totally clogged the waterway. Lunchtime came and went. Selim, whose culinary expertise is limited to boiled eggs or spaghetti, went off to Iznik for food. At the door of his favourite workers' café, there were two oversized luggage trolleys with rucksacks strapped to them. The cook propelled him to a corner table to assist two Frenchmen who were drawing circles around names on a map. As Selim ate his lunch at the next table, they tucked into rice pudding and asked for his help. Would he please telephone the mayor and tell him they had arrived safely? These gentlemen, aged 66 and 71 explained they are pilgrims and are *walking* from Rome to Jerusalem. They are going via Konya, which seems odd. I didn't think Konya was big in Biblical or Christian history. Ephesus was not on their route, but Tarsus is, so perhaps it's the senior citizens' condensed footsteps of St Paul.

How long they have been walking I can't tell you. Why they are doing it I haven't a clue. Selim was too polite to ask. Early evening I sat in the foyer of their hotel eating technicolor ice-creams for an hour, hoping to bump into them. No luck. And you can only eat so many ice-creams.

I can tell you why Selim had to telephone the mayor. When they entered Turkey, someone at the border got worried about these aged gentle souls, so each town hall along the route was notified of their approximate arrival date. They notify each mayor of their arrival and he contacts the next town down the line.

CORNUCOPIA readers between here and the Turkish border beyond Antioch, those of you in Syria and Jordan, please keep your eyes peeled. There can't be many ageing Frenchmen pushing luggage trolleys along the road verges. Please ask them all those questions that Selim didn't.

## Gone fishing

Since the move I have found it impossible to find a quiet corner for my morning ritual of sitting for an hour or so, sorting out the world's problems, thinking of my near and dear and planning my day. But at last my decrepit little plastic boat has arrived and this morning I went off to fish in the reed beds along the edge of the lake. Two or three fishing boats were lowering nets in the distance as I rowed to an area of dense reeds. There, I baited the hook and extended my fishing pole to lower the line in the most likely looking spot. No builders' noise, no tractors arriving with loads of cement or bricks. Wonderful silence. Just the rustle of reeds, the waterbirds and kingfishers, and now and again the louder sounds of what I imagined were ducks splashing and diving nearby. Fishing is a wonderful occupation: one can sit for hours, musing on the state of the world and never be accused of sloth.

As our building team are all of a religious inclination, my tan this summer has been from finger tip to elbow – any more exposed flesh and we might have had a mass walkout. Sitting alone in the reeds, as the sun grew hotter, I began to shed clothes.

Suddenly the fishing pole began to bend dramatically. Standing up to pull in a good-sized carp, I heard the ducks nearby splashing energetically. Looking round, I realised there were no ducks. Three grinning fishermen were standing only yards away in their boats watching me. There I was in my tiny bathtub, a fish flapping at my feet and clothed in little more than confusion. ◆

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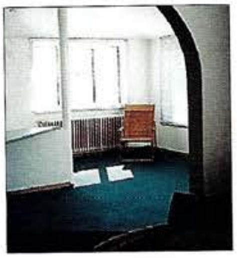

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# Return of the native

WHEN CORNUCOPIA SENT ATEŞ ORGA TO COVER THE ISTANBUL MUSIC FESTIVAL, IT WAS NO ROUTINE ASSIGNMENT. IT WAS A CHANCE FOR HIM TO RETRACE THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS FAMOUS FATHER – THE WRITER IRFAN ORGA – AND TO SEE HIS HOMELAND AGAIN AFTER AN ABSENCE OF HALF A CENTURY

I left Istanbul for London on December 27, 1947, at the age of four, a winter moon on solstice rise. I returned fifty-three years later, a summer sun at solstice rest. I cannot remember much of that childhood flight. But going back, crossing the Rumelian lands of my father's maternal forebears, swinging out over the Black Sea before banking to sweep in low over ochrous, pantiled houses and heat-baked concrete strips, then out again, this time across the Marmara, before folding back for the approach to the marble and stainless steel splendours of the new Atatürk Airport, was a cocktail of high-adrenaline emotions. Here was a city and its place names I had always known – yet never known.

Within an hour of landing, I'm at the Atatürk Cultural Centre listening to a thirty-year retrospective from the Philip Glass Ensemble – a slickly rehearsed fest, breathtakingly attacked, instantly awakening. It jolts me into why I am here: to cover the 28th International Istanbul Music Festival.

The following humid, cloudless morning I awake to two facts of Istanbul life. The extraordinary seasonal turquoise that illuminates the Bosphorus from within. And the notion that reproduction equates with restoration. The truly old exists, of course, often poignantly beautiful. But so equally does a great deal of film-set façade. The yalıs, the ornate, late nineteenth-century Ottoman houses that crowd the banks of the Bosphorus, may look picturesque, but I soon discover many of them to be fake – concrete-framed affairs, plastic-clad rather than timber-boarded, with insulated glazing rather than original windows and pre-cast mouldings in place of carved detail. In a city so many times ravaged by fire, what wooden buildings survive are all too often raggedly inhabited or forlornly dilapidated, some leaning at precarious angles, some sinking towards the water, their structures bared to the frame, every corner a mossy shelter to wraith-like prides of stray cats.

EMRE ARACI

ATEŞ ORGA SAILING TOWARDS THE TOWERS OF KULELI, THE SCHOOL ON THE BOSPHORUS WHERE HIS FATHER WAS A CADET

Remnants of village charm characterise Beylerbeyi, where I am staying – private flower gardens and fountains, shady trees, the fragrant smoke from a wood-burning hamam, an old floodlit mosque, fish restaurants, as well as noisy diesel engines and cracked pavements.

On May 15, 1919 a small boy sailed past this point on the ferry from Galata to Çengelköy, bound for Kuleli, the long, grandly proportioned military school of the Ottomans. He was my father. Once landed, he and his mother and younger brother walked "the sea-road, tree-lined and white in the noonday sun. The school loomed up on our right, like a Palace, I thought, so white was it against the cloudless summer sky". I trace his steps. Not as quiet now as then, but the hour as hot, dusty and bright as he would have remembered, gaily painted rowing boats tethered to the shore, young and old alike fishing their silver quarry.

Suddenly Kuleli is upon me, more massive close to than from the water, dominated by its Teutonic twin towers, its grey stone steps and great-door, its guards beating their watch, its resonant symbols of empire and republic – the green-and-gold swirl of the sultan's *tuğra*, and the crescent-and-star of the national flag. I find it a forbidding place.

How intimidated and cut-off from his home in Beyazıt my father must have felt, how far from the imperial mosque where he would pray on Fridays within sight of the last caliph. My eyes roam to the verdant hill behind. Here, as he grew older, my father would climb to a favourite tree to gaze upon the realms he might one day have to defend – up to the Black Sea, across to Bebek "in all its shimmering morning beauty", down to Dolmabahçe, "white and artificial as a wedding cake". This was his Istanbul, "jewel of the Bosphorus. Grey it would look from this hill, and the smoke from the boats would lie over it like a soft veil, and tall and tapering are the minarets that enchant the skyline". He told me about it often

That afternoon, taking the ferry from Üsküdar to Beşiktaş, watching Leander's Tower and the domed, long-fingered mosques of the Old City and Golden Horn coalesce out of the haze, I head for Aya Sofya, Justinian's impassive altar to Christendom.

In an adjoining leafy garden, English tea with the violinist Cihat Aşkın and friends is taken to the unsynchronised antiphony of amplified muezzins calling the faithful to prayer. Nearby is Sultan Ahmet's imposing Blue Mosque with its six assertive minarets. Down the hill, "a big wooden house, painted white with green shutters and trellised balconies overlooking the Marmara" is where my father passed his childhood.

That evening there's a concert within the Topkapı grounds, in the echoing space of the Byzantine basilica of Aya Irini, the "Church of Divine

*Ateş Orga is director of Music Management Studies at the Dr Erol Üçer Center for Advanced Musical Research, Istanbul Technical University. He is the son of Irfan Orga, author of 'Portrait of a Turkish Family' (Eland Books, £8.99)*

Peace". This is a magnificent survivor from antiquity, dominated as much by its stone floors, vaulted windows and bare walls as by its spotlit cross of black tesseræ stretching domewards.

Under the elegant and inspirational direction of Gürer Aykal, the Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic is the Turkish orchestra to watch these days, its strength and unjaded enthusiasm a tonic to ears tired by the complacency so often encountered west of Vienna.

Strengthened with members from Aykal's American orchestra, the El Paso Symphony – and with two exceptional soloists in Kishna Davis and the theatrically outrageous Lawrence Craig – their way with Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* and Dvorak's *New World Symphony* could not be more natural and idiomatic.

The Turks have always been famous for their hospitality. Minutes after the concert ends, I'm being urged to join the orchestra on their tour south. I go with them as far as Ephesus, crossing the Marmara by sea-bus to Bandırma before setting out by coach to Izmir.

Stone-baked, tinder-grassed Ephesus – unassuming and scarcely visible from the parched roadside, powerful and astral-charged within – is the closest I come this trip to the tourist trail. While our guide goes quaintly through her routine, I make my own acquaintance with the rooms and homes that stood here, with the ghosts who perchance still wander the ruins when the visitors are gone. This Saturday of apricot sunset, though, they have to wait. First for the concert in the amphitheatre, an open-air presentation of the 14th International Izmir Festival. Lawrence Craig's impromptu use of every ancient stone as a theatrical prop sets the press cameras flashing, the Dvorak cor anglais solo touched greatness to the accompaniment of cicadas, and an old dog from the bush padded the tiers, caring for neither minister nor millionaire. Then for a candle-lit reception in the colonnaded remains of the Library, the heat of the night a backcloth to pulse-quickening folk dances, to flirtatious, intoxicated exchanges, to aching romance within the shadows. Then for our long walk out of history down the Marble Way, torch-lit beneath the stars, and back to air-conditioned modernity.

In Istanbul, my second week sees a friend from Cambridge, the composer-musicologist Emre Aracı, arrive to keep me company. In seventy-two hours we accomplish much. Taking a boat up the Bosphorus, we land at Sarıyer, formerly the summer refuge of the Ottoman elite, where as a boy my father would go to his uncle's yalı, with its rose-scented rooms, its magnolia gardens and greenhouses, its grapevines and orchard. As a young Air Force officer he went back, but by then it was tumbled down, "vanished like its long-dead owners", its garden "choked with weeds". We have less luck, able only to imagine. But we do find the dark, balconied, curvaceously carved, weatherboarded house that had once belonged to Emre's family, now padlocked and up for sale, in a bad state of repair.

The following day we take a very different journey, across the Bosphorus, then east through Izmit to Karamürsel on one of the long blue inlets of the Marmara. This is last year's earthquake country. Everyway there is devastation – broken houses, cracked walls no more than a brick wide, mound upon mound of rubble, dangerously tottering apartment blocks leering like sightless corpses. No one can sell their property, and the locals tell us that buildings aren't being demolished because the authorities are waiting for the next earthquake to finish off the job. Yet old men sit around talking politics, smoking, and drinking tea from delicate glasses. Tanned, short-cropped, barefoot boys play in the dust. Everywhere satellite dishes sprout from unlikely corners. Maybe the taller buildings are no longer habitable, but their ground floors are home to ramshackle open-front shops. Fruit sellers water their produce to keep it fresh.

Karamürsel is where Aunt Bedia and Cousin Oya live. I cannot recall ever having met them – though they assure me I have. We communicate falteringly, silently. Effectively we're strangers known to each other only through dated, faded images. Yet they open their house and arms to me. Here are the foods and smells of my childhood. Photographs from when we were young. A shrine to my father's books. The telegram I sent thirty years ago telling of his death. Carefully pressed memorabilia of other times, another land. We touch, we sense, we drink the moment. The evening bus comes. My aunt gazes after me, matriarchally impassive but her eyes piercing deep, wanting perhaps to see something again of the men into whose family she had married. My cousin busies herself. Her niece and nephew come to say their goodbyes, pictures of eau-de-cologne grace and modesty. As we pull away I look back, lingering to remember better this spot where the earth gasps and the sea comes so lazily to kiss.

Following the path into my past, Emre and I spend an afternoon beyond the old Byzantine city walls, in the Merkezefendi graveyard, a forgotten expanse of cool stillness and smoky sun-beamed shadows. We come across Halide Edip's grave, shamefully neglected and uncelebrated for so famous a mistress of letters. We stumble upon a rusting, long-ruined mausoleum to a dervish cook. We see with disbelief the small, roughly chiselled rock marking the resting place of the painter Ibrahim Çallı. Suddenly she's there. Şevkiye Orga, my grandmother, 1895–1940: even shorter-lived, it seems, than my father remembered.

The rose trees he and his brother planted have gone, the marble headstone is dull, everywhere is a brittle tangle of overgrown weeds. Tidying what I can, I stoop to her memory. Then, following her sons before us, "with the sun and the kindly rain and the eternal nights to come", we leave her to her sleep.

The Istanbul Festival climaxes with the stunning spectacle of Matthew Bourne's gender-controversial *Swan Lake*, part of this year's programme, which included the King's Consort, Kiri Te Kanawa and Nigel Kennedy.

Turkish music was variously represented – from the classical vocalist Meral Uğurlu and the period-instrument Bezmârâ Ensemble, through contemporary song (Mesut Iktu), to the world premiere of Kudsi Ergüner's *Nazım Hikmet: Of Life and Death*.

Uğurlu's phrasing, elegance and artistry were unmistakable – but the Turkish weakness for indiscriminate amplification made for an unmusical balance, the voice too much to the fore, the inherant intimacy of the instruments lost.

So to my final Saturday, with the soprano Yelda Kodallı for morning coffee and patisseries à la parisienne in the Pera Palas Hotel – not much reproduction here, just immoderate Orient Express ornament, Art Nouveau wrought-iron, and an overwhelming turquoise-domed ballroom. I ask to try out the pianos, but no one can find the keys to unlock them.

My plane back to London is on Monday at sunrise. There is time still to watch the traffic on the Bosphorus, and time to ponder a society of contrasts and paradoxes. Time to recall a landscape where mountains are sliced in half for their marble, where advertising hoardings savage the forest harmony, where flags affirm and reaffirm the national psyche. Time to relive that first recognition of Kuleli in the distance of the night, and to remember good companionship by the waters of Beylerbeyi. ◆

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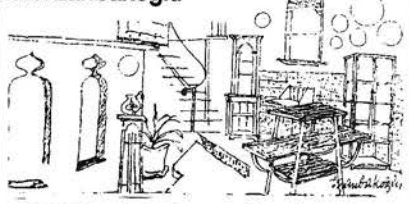

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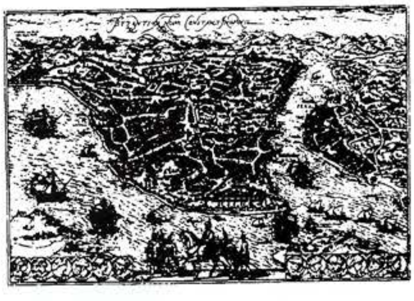

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# ISTANBUL DIARY

## Timber is tops

ANDREW FINKEL MEETS AN APPOSTLE OF WOOD

As food is to foodie, so wood is to... Perhaps "woodie" hasn't quite entered the vocabulary, but that is certainly not the fault of Emine Erdoğmuş, who, when she is not flogging stains and paints and things to treat wood, is president of Turkey's wood committee for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), an NGO linked to UNESCO. It is, she confesses, an honorific not unlike the Grand Pooh-Bah of All China: she is out there beating her drum, but there are only a few stragglers marching behind.

Now, perhaps as a result of the August 1999 earthquake, wood is on the architectural agenda again. In the aftermath of that disaster, any number of technical conferences have produced a terrifying set of confessions over the lack of standardisation in the way concrete is made, mixed and poured in Turkey. You can build a huge concrete structure in the middle of a lake that will withstand an earthquake, but only if construction is properly supervised. "There are 500,000 units built every year in Turkey – there is just no way to control them all," Erdoğmuş said.

With wood, it's much simpler. To check the thing is right, all you have to do is measure the thickness of the ply and the number of nails per metre. Even if you make a mistake, the chances are nobody will die.

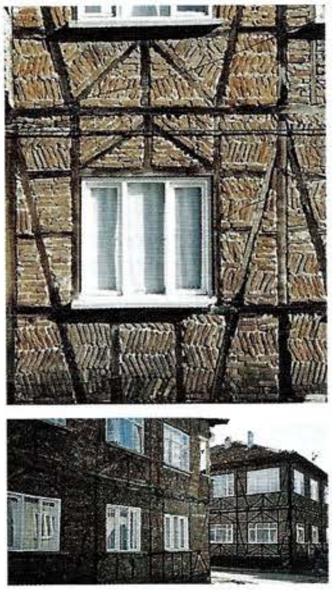
Timber buildings are safer than concrete, even in a fire. The wood doesn't burn like kindling – the structure normally stands for an hour and a half. Steel-frame buildings collapse far more quickly. In America, 92 per cent of homes are made with timber frames. The figure is higher still in California, where building to earthquake regulations makes wood even more economical. Yet in Turkey construction in wood is not even on the university curriculum.

The irony, of course, is that Turkey has an extraordinary "wooden" heritage going back at least to the Royal Tomb of Gordion. Near Polatlı, on the Ankara–Istanbul railway line, it is still intact – a wooden chamber inside a tumulus dating from 800 BC. The Great Mosque at Sivrihisar, with its timber ceiling and internal wooden pillars, dates from the thirteenth century. Among the photographs in Erdoğmuş's collection is one of an elegant prefabricated bungalow made in only three weeks in the palace workshops of Abdülhamid II (himself an accomplished carpenter) and used as a pavilion for Kaiser Wilhelm when he toured the silk carpet factories in Hereke in 1894. Around that time, the largest wooden building in the world (designed as a hotel but used as an orphanage) was being constructed on the Istanbul island of Büyükada. It is 21 metres high (eight storeys according to today's standards) but, like the skill and knowledge it embodies, rotting from neglect.

The day of our interview Emine Erdoğmuş had just succeeded in legally registering the Turkish Timber Association, another non-profit organisation that aims to make people think about wood. She herself began musing on the subject nearly twenty years ago at the start of her professional life. As a chemist, she was investigating the possibility of manufacturing pregnancy testing kits. Instead, she ended up importing chemicals to impregnate telephone poles. From preserving wood to preserving "wood culture" was a logical step.

One of the first things she learnt was that wood is a less precious material than many other things. If you use wood for construction, you are exhausting a natural resource, you might think. The truth is quite the opposite. In fact, one of the UN's environmentalist slogans is "Cut trees to save the forests". In societies where people use more wood, it has been shown that the size of the forest increases. The American experience shows wood being used as the frame for large five-storey housing estates, even though they are clad inside and out with other materials.

Not an engineer herself, Erdoğmuş is reluctant to preach about learning from their own history to a construction industry in love with modernity. "There were many of us in the aftermath of the earthquake who thought we had things to say but were reluctant to be seen to be profiteering from disaster," she said. Like acolytes of some early church, these like-minded souls crowded one night not long after the earthquake into YEM – downtown Istanbul's equivalent of the Building Centre – to affirm their common faith. That dedication is now bearing fruit. Erdoğmuş was recently the driving force behind a much-lauded meeting in Istanbul sponsored by ICOMOS to assess the lessons to be learnt from the "seismic performance" of traditional buildings. It attracted participants from twenty-five countries, including the UK, China, New Zealand and Nepal.



PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN IN ADAPAZARI A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE 1999 EARTHQUAKE. WHILE ENTIRE DISTRICTS OF CONCRETE APARTMENT BLOCKS COLLAPSED IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, THIS STREET OF TIMBER-FRAME HOUSES, WHICH WERE BUILT AFTER AN EARLIER EARTHQUAKE IN THE 1960S, SURVIVED INTACT

Traditional buildings are textbooks that have to be studied, according to Erdoğmuş. Why do people build so high and not higher, or use protruding beams in what looks like over-construction, for reasons not readily apparent? In the case of timber beams, it could be to allow for a margin of rot without sacrificing load-bearing capacity. If a timber-framed building cracks, it has done its job of being flexible – you can put on some plaster. If the same thing happens in concrete, you'd better make for the door.

At the very least she hopes her efforts will encourage people to cherish old buildings. Too much of the modern urban landscape in Turkey is like the family who traded their valuable antiques for a shiny new Formica table. A cruel lesson of August 1999 was that it reminded people of what they had lost.

### Eating out

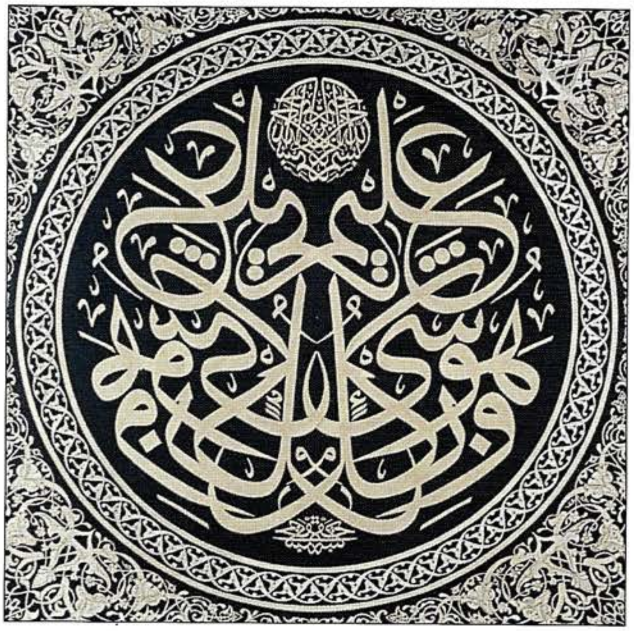
# New Med meets New York

By Andrew Finkel

I went tumbling into a time warp the other day in London's West End. The cause was not the wine bar (remember them?) where I was meeting a friend but the neon sign I passed on the way. It belonged to a restaurant advertising something called "Continental Cuisine", a school I thought had disappeared with Donny Osmond. "Continental" once spoke of a land beyond Calais where no roast-beef trolley dared venture. It was elbowed aside by the (not-so) New British Cuisine and a belief in a common gastronomic currency and the free movement of any useful ingredient, be it couscous, ginger or buckets of balsamic vinegar.

So there I stood, in torrential rain, peering at the menu posted by the door. I should have guessed. "Continental", these days, means EU-aspirant: most of the dishes were obviously Turkish – *imam bayıldı* and kebabs.

And yet, munching my way through Istanbul's latest offerings, I realise that what's "obviously Turkish" may not be so obvious much longer. The top end of the market has decided to topple tradition by spinning the globe. The **Mediterranean Bar and Grill** describes itself ambitiously as Southern European cooking filtered through the eyes of New York. Another restaurant, **Chefs**, has recently opened its doors in an elegant building above Beşiktaş which first served as a police station and more recently as the most curlicued of arabesque eateries. A cool, clean retrofit makes it worthy of the Upper West Side. Chef serves – you guessed it – "New Mediterranean Cuisine".



The writing is on the walls

An extraordinary collection of Ottoman calligraphy continues its global peregrinations. The exhibition, 'Letters in Gold', from the Sakip Sabanci Collection, arrives at the Guggenheim in Berlin on February 2, where it remains until April 8. This summer the collection returns to Turkey to mark the opening of the new Sabanci Museum. The museum – Sakip Sabanci's former home which he donated to the university he founded – is in Emirgan, on the Bosphorus. It aims to provide Istanbul with an exhibition space capable of attracting major collections from around the world

Let's start with the Mediterranean B&G. It is owned by the Borsa chain – imaginative restaurateurs whose eponymous flagship occupies a terrace below the Lütfi Kırdar Congress Center. Mediterranean is in the same complex, next to the huge underground annexe. It is not entirely underground (there are picture windows and a terrace) but it still has a bunker-like feel. The decorators have tried, with luminescent aquamarine wallpaper and chiffony curtains, to liven up the room, but the interior remains the greatest drawback. This is unfortunate, because the food is pleasing and the service intelligently attentive. The menu is designed by Mustafa Baylan, a chef with a long track record in Istanbul's five-star hotels and abroad.

We ate our way through the menu: prawns, lamb, duck, all decoratively prepared, with imaginative accompaniments. My only gripe was that the food is just that little bit timid. You think of Mediterranean food as having more intense flavours, but perhaps the restraining hand is the New York chic poking through. The desserts were properly rich – pumpkin cheesecake or a hot frangipane which wasn't quite the soufflé as described. There was Boğa Kanı (Bull's Blood) on the wine menu – a not-all-that common vintage produced at the Atatürk Farms outside Ankara which, in the current era of hyped Turkish wine prices, provides something like value for money.

Sinan Kafadar (designer of the Four Seasons and the new Ritz Carlton) is the architect responsible for Chefs. It has the feel of an informal dining club, and the main room is properly dramatic – high, bright white walls with geometric ceilings. The food, too, is theatrical, designed to make one ooh and ah before the fork goes in. A hamburger at lunch was a sort of tower of Pisa: the bun, then the meat, then the cheese, then the onion rings, then the French fries on top – all surrounded by a coulis of something nicer than ketchup. I had to think for a moment how to eat it.

Chefs is a venture between two émigré cooks, Marco Anzani – Italian, obviously enough – and Mike Norman, from South Africa. Their images are graven in little white and dark chocolate "idols" dotted around the room and on the door handles as you leave. The erstwhile advertising guru Atilla Aksoy is the not-quite-silent partner – his presence is felt in the choice of jazz and the celebrity photos which line the walls (I had dinner watched by Samuel Beckett and Woody Allen, with John Wayne looking the other way).

Groucho Marx is in the corner, no doubt inspiring some of the clientele to smoke big, fat cigars. Despite the high ceilings, the ventilation system was just about up to it, but I was disappointed to see a waiter show smokers an array of Havanas rather than the door.

The attractive thing about Chefs is that you can go there not just to be seen but to eat. Dinner was fun, confirmed with desserts that operate on the elegant principle of a little bit of this and a little bit of that. The chocolate "decadence" is a series of dark offerings including a thimble-sized chocolate-liqueured milk shake with a straw. Only the quince tatin was a disappointment because it wasn't the caramelised upside-down cake that it should be.

Before that came pork with red cabbage and bacon lentil stew; magret de canard with Chinese noodles, a sort of beef sausage heavily scented with cumin. These are not obviously Mediterranean, but I don't suppose it matters a jot. The chefs of Chefs are clearly preparing large portions of food that they themselves like – and that's the way it should be.

**Mediterranean Bar & Grill**
Lütfi Kırdar Congress Center (lower entrance by the Rumeli Hall), Harbiye, Istanbul. Tel 90-212 219 6384/85

**Chefs**
Ihlamur Sok No 6, Yıldız Cad, Beşiktaş, Istanbul. Tel 90-212 258 4407

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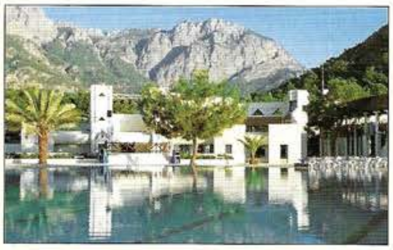

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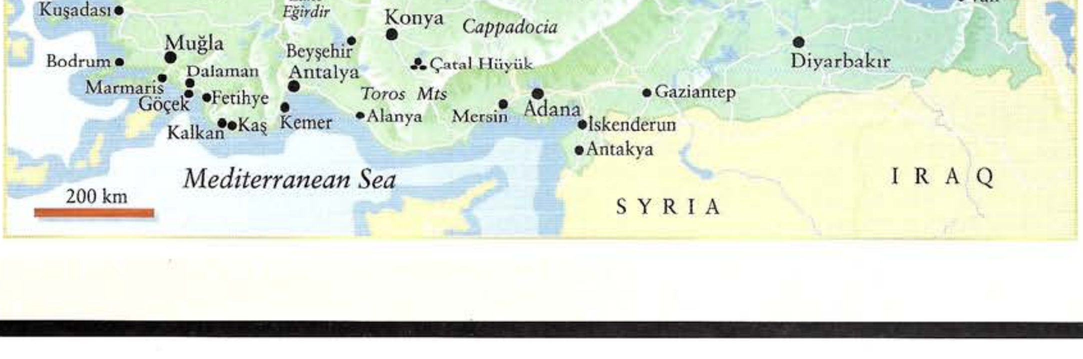
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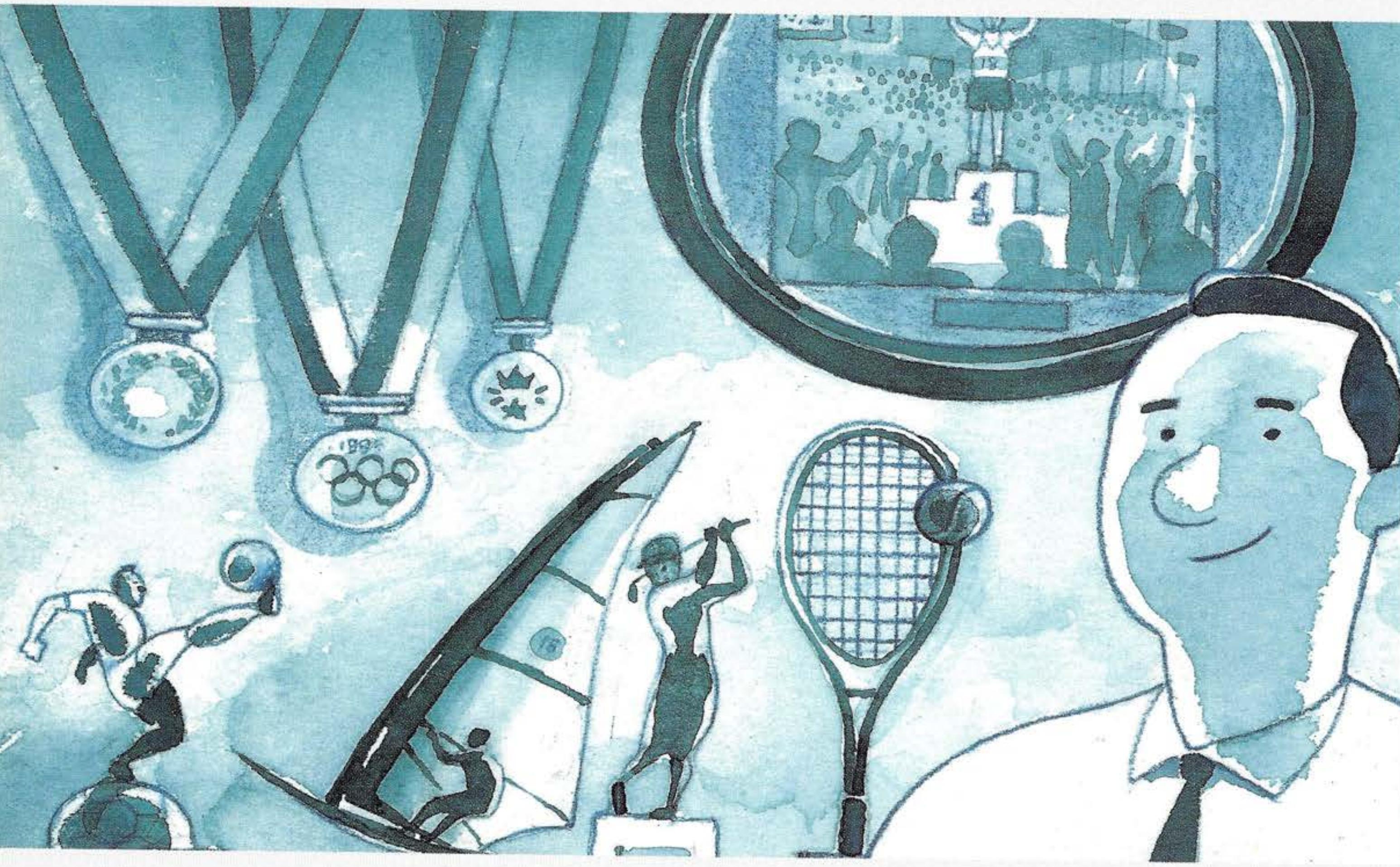

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